

Batsford Chess Library

Beating the Caro-Kann

Vassilios Kotronias



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Symbols

+-	White is winning
±	White is clearly better
±	White is slightly better
=	The position is equal
±	Black is slightly better
±	Black is clearly better
-+	Black is winning
+	Check
*	Mate
!	Good move
?	Bad move
!!	Excellent move
??	Blunder
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move
OL	Olympiad
Ch	Championship
IZ	Interzonal
Z	Zonal
corr.	Correspondence

Introduction

Books on openings usually end up in a dusty corner in one's library, especially nowadays. The reason is that chess theory develops like a monstrous creature, bombarded by computer information containing tens of thousands of games. Unlike good old times, main lines change with lightning speed and paths thought to be forgotten provide raw material for the experts. In fact there is nothing wrong with modern informatics, because chess is a scientific game and has to go on like that; the negative aspects of it are revealed when one spurns what is essential for the sake of 'ephemeral wisdom', and that characterizes many players of the new generation.

When I started writing this book, I understood the need to emphasize the ideas governing an opening variation. Therefore these ideas are presented separately (Chapter 0, since I think they form the most valuable part of the whole material; but the main reason is that the readers should be able

to get a general picture of the various motifs that would help them evaluate a certain position. If they manage to do so, the purpose of this book will be fulfilled.

Chapters 2 to 6 feature the current status of theory in the variation suggested. An effort has been made to cover all gaps and present a complete repertoire for White. This doesn't mean I lost my objectivity; on the contrary, a reappraisal was made in positions previously dismissed as clearly bad for Black. From this point of view, this book can serve as a useful guide for those who wish to update their archives and spot the critical positions. Emphasis has been given in supportive analysis, a necessary tool for one's homework, and I hopefully expect it will prove so, combined with the introductory ideas.

As usual in the Batsford series of "Beating the ..." books, the material is presented in the form of complete games with all theoretical analysis incorporated in the

notes. In this way the reader is presented with the most important links connecting the opening with typical middle-game positions and even the endgame. My selection was based mainly on the criterion that these games should exemplify White's strategy in the Caro Advance as well as possible. The book also contains some of White's remarkable failures, but I could not help including them as they are interesting from both a competitive and creative point of view. My main selection criterion for the games included in this book was the strength of

the players, but care was taken not to leave out of this survey any games that might be interesting or theoretically important.

I hope that the material will prove to be stimulating and provide food for thought for those who wish to discover new ways of playing the variation with either color. For those who wish to be creative not only at the chessboard but also at home, I think the lines suggested are most suitable. After all, confidence in one's repertoire depends to a certain extent upon one's own personal analysis.

A Brief History

About the Caro-Kann in General

The Caro-Kann Defence was introduced into serious competition by the German players H. Caro and M. Kann in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As one might expect for an opening whose first principle was solidity, initially it was not greeted with great enthusiasm from the majority of chess fans. Nevertheless, its intrinsic merits soon caught the attention of some of the world's leading masters and it has been championed by many top players throughout the last hundred years. No less a player than Capablanca used it to good effect on several occasions, besting some of the most eminent grandmasters of his era with his customary virtuosity. A classic example, featured in this book, is his game against Nimzowitsch played in the New York super-tournament of 1927. A few years later Soviet GMs Botvinnik and Flohr took over, their scientific treatment of the game doing much to enhance

the opening's popularity.

Since then, the Caro-Kann has been one of the main weapons in most World Champions' opening armoury. Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian, Karpov and, occasionally, Kasparov have successfully defended the Black side, especially in matches at the highest level. I suspect this choice was not at all by chance, as the 'Caro' is easier to play than the Sicilian, the Spanish or even the French, especially if Black is satisfied with a draw. However, the asymmetrical pawn structure which arises after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 $\text{\textcircled{E}}\text{c3}$ dxe4 means that Black can also play for a win, on the condition that he will accept a slightly worse position by avoiding liquidations during the early phases of the game.

Advance Variation

The Advance Variation (3 e5) is the most natural way to sidestep Black's drawing tendencies and was seriously tested for the first time in the World Championship match between Tal and Botvinnik in 1961. Tal's

result with it was rather disappointing (as was his whole performance) and this was probably responsible for the line's abandonment in the next twenty years. The line was revived in the game Hart-Seirawan, Bad Kissingen 1981, which, however, resulted in a brilliant win for Black. Whilst one might have expected this to have caused the revival to be stillborn, in fact the opposite was the case and it soon became apparent that Black could not hold his own in the hair-raising complications after 3 ... ♘f5 4 ♗c3 e6 5 ♗d7 ♘g6 6 ♗g2 e5 7 h4 cxd4? 8 ♗xd4 h5 9 f4. Later on, Black devised ways of improving his play by deviating on the 7th move and by now the attention of White players has switched to more positional (and safer) paths.

Over the past decade, the above mentioned system (starting with 4 ♗c3 e6 5 ♗d7) was mainly championed by the Dutch GM and twice Candidates' finalist Jan Timman. He contributed a lot to its development with many interesting

novelties, but in most of the games he failed to reap the fruits of his labour since some positions are easier to play with Black, even if he stands objectively worse! This might seem a bit discouraging to the average player, but one should not forget that the primary purpose of chess analysis should be to heal our weaknesses rather than improve our strengths.

My personal experience with the variation, especially the alternative 4 ... ♗f6, taught me that one should not trust results but only objective analysis. I started playing the Advance in 1986; at the time nobody would accept that 5 ♘d3? could lead to some sort of game for White. Today, I think that the move is worthy of an ? and tomorrow - who knows? - the evaluation might change again. On the strength of the analysis presented in this book, it is my firm belief that 4 ♗c3 is at least equal to the alternatives and I hope that readers will add their own contribution to the history of this topical opening.

1 Ideas in the Advance Variation

The Caro has long been considered one of Black's main defences against 1 e4. World Champions Capablanca, Botvinnik and Karpov have been its regular practitioners, which speaks itself for the soundness of the system and its particular merits: solidity, clarity and controlled aggression. Contrary to the typical French Defence scenario, the light-squared bishop can develop freely along the c8-h3 diagonal and the struggle is of an open nature with clear-cut aims.

The Advance Variation is characterized by the move 3 e5, partly closing the centre. In that sense it is not a typical Caro-Kann and might cause discomfort to players whose main attraction to the opening was its simplicity. Also, Black is denied the traditional counterplay along the d- and (possibly) g-files as well as the square f6 for his knight's development.

In comparison with the French Advance, Black has acquired the privilege of developing his bishop on f5. How-

ever, this does not automatically mean that he has also managed to solve all his opening problems: he is a tempo down in the fight for the center with the break ... c5 and the bishop's position might turn out to be vulnerable. The purpose of this section is not to give concrete evaluations regarding these questions, but to examine typical situations with a view to helping readers in their assessments.

The Centre

The situation in the centre is always a major factor, defining the character of the chess struggle. In our case, the Nimzowitsch' pawn structure (d4, e5 for White, e6, d5 for Black) means that White will have to meet the thrusts ... c6-c5 or ... f7-f5 to his center and shape accordingly his own plans. These involve f2-f4-f5, hitting the base of Black's pawn chain, as well as expansion on the kingside with gains of time on the enemy bishop.

Sometimes White exchanges the light-squared bishops in

return for a space and time advantage. Then his proper reaction to Black's central thrusts differs; it has to do more with piece manoeuvring rather than pawn storms.

Before going on, it should be noted that the main object of this book is to analyse positions where White develops his queen's knight on c3. Although White is deprived of the possibility c2-c3, fortifying his centre, he receives a lot of compensation in the form of quick development and excellent attacking chances.

Short's way of treating the position ♠f3 and ♗e2, although by far the most solid one, does not put Black under pressure right from the start. Therefore, it is a useful weapon only for those who wish to avoid complications at an early stage. It is outside the spirit of this book to suggest such a line, since it does not comply with the general directions of battling the Caro-Kann as they have already been described above.

In this part of the book, I wish to take a close look at various general situations White may encounter in practice. Here I have taken some liberties with the diagrams in order to add more emphasis to pawn structures and their transformations.

In our first diagram, Black



has chosen to attack the base of White's chain by ... c6-c5. It seems that this thrust is more effective here than in the French, as the bishop stands actively on g6 while White's centre lacks the protective c2-c3. However, appearances can be deceptive. White does not necessarily have to reinforce d4 with a pawn; a knight would be very strong there. In addition, Black has spent two tempi to get his pawns to e5 and its partner on e6 lacks the valuable protection a 'bad' bishop could provide. Not surprisingly, this invites White to attack with f2-f4-f5.



Diagram 2 shows the results

of a correct White strategy: the f-pawn has achieved the stunting (even temporarily) of the black bishop, while putting e6 under serious pressure. The pressure can be increased by moves like ♗g2-f4 or ♗f1-h3, as captures on f5 weaken decisively the d5 pawn. Black's only chance is to strive for counterplay on the queenside by means of ... c5-c4, ... b7-b5 etc. (see also the section Flank Activity!).

It goes without saying that an early ... c5d4 favours White since his pieces become active and the thematic pawn advance f2-f4-f5 gains in strength.

Now we shall proceed to examine positions where Black challenges White's central superiority with ... f7-f6. Such a position can be seen in diagram 3.



Black's choice has a two-fold purpose: to create a mobile pawn-mass in the centre and simultaneously provide a safe spot for his bishop on f7. From that square the bishop also guards the newly-created

weakness on e6, albeit at some cost in mobility.

A typical structure often arising in practice is the one presented in diagram 4.



Black has achieved his aim of obtaining a pawn preponderance in the centre as White took back on e5 with the d-pawn. This is, however, better than f4xe5 which deprives White's position of its dynamism and leaves the e-pawn practically isolated, ... c6-c5 not being far away. White should now hurry to redeploy his knight to f3 via d4, preventing the positional threat ... g7-g5. If he fails to stop it, Black's bishop will be out for good after the forced recapture h5g6 e.p.

Sometimes Black delays taking on e5, thinking that he has all the time in the world at his disposal. This is a risky strategy and White can take advantage of it by a timely capture on f6.

In the resulting positions (similar to diagram 5) White



has the better pawn formation and a potential passed pawn on the kingside. Black's e-pawn is backward, but advancing it creates a hole on f5 for White's knight. These factors in conjunction with a slight space advantage guarantee White the better game.

A doubtful experiment is when Black combines both pawn breaks, hoping to liquidate White's centre and finally occupy it. In that case, White should opt for a general liquidation that would make his development tell. A position like diagram 6 comes to mind.



As usual, the energetic advance of the f-pawn has

played an important rôle in the realization of White's plans. The central wall is falling apart, it only remains to be seen whether Black's exposure is of fatal dimensions.

So far we have only looked at positions with light-squared bishops on the board. Exchanging these bishops seems anti-positional for White, but it can be justified if Black weakens his kingside or neglects his development. After all, White's remaining bishop is not that 'bad' if one compares its present mobility to its black counterpart. What White players should be aware of, is the potential danger of drifting into a passive ending, especially if the position in the centre stabilizes.



Diagram 7 features such an ending, with White having the inferior bishop and a permanent weakness on d4. This kind of endgame might be tenable, but it is obviously not in one's interests to suffer for a draw as White.

The new situation without light-squared bishops demands a slightly different approach but basically the principle is the same: open up the position when you have the chance! This means that White should avoid answering ... c4-c5 with c2-c3, as that would lead to a fixed central structure, identical to the one in the previous diagram. The pawn on d4 would be a constant worry, while the attack usually falls without the king's bishop.

Counterattacking by f2-f4-f5 is difficult to achieve since Black can intensify his control on f5 by ... g7-g6 and ... h7-h5 in combination with ... g8-e7. This is the main difference from previous examples, when Black could not organize a similar defence, as the bishop on g6 was standing in the way.

A typical reaction to ... c6-c5 after the exchange of the light-squared bishops can be seen in the following diagram:



The knight has retreated to d1 in order to free the way for

the c-pawn. White's queen stands excellently, pressing towards the kingside and at the same time indirectly helping central operations, since ... d5xc4 could be met with d4-d5. Also important is the preventive rôle of the pawn on a5, which stops the consolidating ... c4d7-b6. In general, White's position holds good prospects for the coming complications.

If White is not prepared to answer ... c6-c5 with c2-c4 he should opt for the modest approach of capturing on c5 and playing with his pieces on the kingside (diagram 9).



After d4xc5, c4-d3 strengthens both e5 and f2. The knight from c3 can be redeployed via e2 to the kingside, with good attacking chances. A final remark is that the ... f7-f6 break has been rendered more weakening than usual after the exchange of bishops. So Black avoids it unless White gets completely reckless.

Here, our examination of various central motifs comes to

an end. Evidently, it is difficult to cover all cases, but I think that the examples given are quite representative of what White should aim for, and what he should try to avoid.

Flank Activity

Space is, undoubtedly, the most double-edged element in the game of chess. Unlike tempo or material, rules cannot be made about its relative value and everything depends upon the placing of the pieces. Therefore, the players' ability to evaluate each specific situation is of paramount importance.

Regarding the Advance Caro, there is an important axiom related to the value of space: the side with more space in the centre can operate on either flank with greater ease. This axiom is confirmed repeatedly in this variation, as most flank attacks are launched by White.

White's kingside expansion is a standard method of flank activity and characterizes many lines of the variation as a whole. It is grounded on the fact that Black's bishop on f5 provides White with enough tempo for its realization, and has the two-fold purpose of restricting the bishop's mobility as well as inducing weaknesses in the opponent's pawn formation.

Diagram 10 features the starting position of White's



attack. After the bold g2-g4, forcing the retreat ... Qf5-g6, comes the aggressive follow-up with Qe2-e2 and h2-h4 (10).



In this position, which we may consider as a *tabiya* for this opening, White is poised to answer the positional shot ... h7-h5, with Qe2-f4, either winning a pawn or ruining the enemy pawn formation. Besides this risky attempt, Black can choose between:

- a) ... f7-f6, hitting the centre at the cost of weakening e6;
- b) ... c5d4, enforcing ... h7-h5 by diverting the knight's attention from f4; and
- c) ... h7-h6, giving up some space, but avoiding positional

concessions.

We have already witnessed during our discussion of central motifs, that as a rule White reacts properly to his opponent's plans by advancing his f-pawn. Cases (a) and (c) were partly covered there, while a brief comment was made on the negative aspects of possibility (b).

Evidently, it is impossible to examine wing operations separately from central affairs, especially when they have a decisive impact on each other. Thus, in the following we shall concentrate on positions with crystallized central structures, such as can be derived from options (b) and (c).



Diagram 12 features the starting position of a forced sequence, with White resorting to tactical measures in order to prove the viability of his system.

Black has just played ... h7-h5, hoping to turn White's kingside demonstration into a meaningless one. Were White

now to play g4-g5, his attack would be stopped dead in its tracks leaving a gruesome weakness on f5 as its only recollection. However, the newly established knight on d5 allows White a strong, albeit familiar, advance.

1 f4! hxg4 2 Qb5+ Qd7 3 f5! Qxh4 4 f6! exf5 5 e6

The complications are definitely in White's favour, as is demonstrated in Game 5, Nagel-Wouters and the extensive analysis included therein.

In the above example, White had to rely solely on tactics to avoid falling into an inferior position. The disadvantage of Black's idea was that he conceded the square d4 to the white knight with loss of tempo, thus relaxing the central pressure and creating a strong base for White's operations. Black may deny White using this square by a timely ... c5-c4, especially when both sides castle long. Then, relaxing the central pressure is more justified as the resulting pawn phalanx points menacingly at the white king.

In diagram 13 Black is ready for a massive assault on the queenside by ... g6-g6 and ... b7-b5-b6. White's pawn already stands on f5, so Qe2-f4, intensifying the pressure on e6, seems appropriate: it normally results in the pawn reaching f7 after Black sacrifices (cor-



rectly) both e- and f-pawns. Since releasing the h7 bishop adds yet another weapon to Black's armoury, White must be aware that investing a piece would rather be necessary if he wants to stave off the mating threats. As is customary for such races, play becomes highly unbalanced; nevertheless the pawn on f7 might prove an important long-term asset (for a detailed analysis see the second match game Timmer-Schrova, Game 10).

If the light-squared bishops have been exchanged, White obviously lacks a target for an analogous expansion on the kingside. However, the bishops' absence allows White to carry out a different plan with a view to gaining space on the other wing. Take for instance the case of diagram 14.

Here the conditions are ideal for White to achieve his aims. Black has spent too much time creating a strongpoint on f5, thus neglecting the mobilization of his queenside. White



can take advantage of this by playing ...

1 b3! ♠d7 2 e4 ♠f8 3 ♠d2
 4 g6 4 c5±

as Black is unable during this sequence to react successfully by ... c6-c5.

Finally, an exceptional case, with White attacking on the queenside and all pieces still on board can be found in the following example.



Black needs just one tempo to consolidate his central position by playing ... ♠e7-c6. White must prevent this, so the energetic 1 b4! is called for, sacrificing a pawn to open lines against the enemy king. This move has also the additional

advantage of breaking up Black's central pawn front, consequently freeing d4 for use by White's pieces. All in all, a promising attack is in sight, requiring only a tiny material investment on White's part.

So far, so good: attacking ideas have formulated the main part of our discussion. But as Nimzowitsch pointed out many years ago, chess is not only about attack and defence; it is prevention and prophylaxis as well. Sometimes, White has to be modest and think about stopping Black's counterplay before going on with his own plans.

A case where flank activity has strictly a preventive rôle can be seen in the following diagram.



While it is clear that White's future lies on the kingside, he goes in for the paradoxical 1 a4. In fact this is not an attacking gesture, but a solid way to take the sting out of ... c6-c5 which would now be met strongly by ♠c3-b5. Also, White prepares

to exchange, if necessary, his inferior bishop by b2-b3, ♠c1-a3.

Certainly, Black can also try to be active on the queenside. We have already witnessed the case of diagram 13, with Black launching a dangerous attack on the white king; however, in principle queenside activity backfires if there are no concrete targets and freedom of movement in his interior lines.



Diagram 17 features a spearheading effort on the queenside. Black has just played ... b7-b5, thinking he will get away with it, in view of the closed nature of the position. But in fact, such reasoning is incorrect, since sooner or later ... c6-c5 has to occur and Black's demonstration will prove wicketing and time-consuming.

The reader might have noticed that there was hardly any mention of White attacks on the kingside without pawns. As a matter of fact, this is a rare bird in the Advance Variation and is going to be exam-

ined in the "Manoeuvres" section.

Strongpoints - Piece Exchanges

Securing strongpoints for one's minor pieces is a common theme in most semi-open Take for example the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian, where it is a customary idea for Black to create an outpost for his knight on e5, in front of an isolated white e-pawns (by ... e6-e5/d4); to achieve this, he usually concedes a correspondingly strong square for White on d5. In our case, typical squares for outposts derive from the nature of the central pawn formation, and are d4 for White and f5 for Black.

It is well known that in French-like pawn structures the square d4 can become a useful base of operations for White's pieces. According to Nimzowitsch, White should always keep a firm control on d4 and e5 so that when Black tries to liquidate his central pawns these squares can be taken up by pieces. In the French hybrid of the Caro Advance, occurring after 3 ... c5? 4 dxc5!, White has enough time to carry out these ideas, as Black has lost a tempo without causing any disruption in his opponent's development.

Diagram 18 features the final position of a piece of analysis



by Pechman. White has complete domination of d4 since Black has had to exchange the dark-squared bishops in order to recover his pawn. Pechman's last move (♖d1-d4) indicates his preference for a better endgame, but also acceptable is the Nimzowitschian approach, with 0-0, ♗f1-e1, to be followed by ♗c3-e2-d4. In both cases, the superiority of knight vs bishop is quite evident.

The knight on d4, apart from its blockading duties, can serve attacking purposes as well. We have already witnessed the case of diagram 12, where its function was to support the advance of White's f-pawn and simultaneously attack e6, finally resulting in a sacrificial breakthrough. Dramatic developments are not to be expected in the next example, but the knight's rôle is very similar.

The main characteristic of this position is the inclusion of the move ... h7-h6 in Black's defensive set-up. This inspires White to attack either by push-



ing his pawn to f5, or by g4-g5-g6, exploiting the weakened light-square complex on Black's kingside. His knight is supremely placed for both plans, exerting pressure against the potential weakness on e6. It should be noted here that, despite the absence of the light-squared bishops, White's pawn advances are justifiable as Black cannot build the well-known defensive formation with pawns on g6 and h5.

As has already been mentioned, Black's traditional outpost in the center is the square f5. Occupation of this square by a knight presupposes an early exchange of the light-squared bishops. Black usually strengthens the knight's position by ... h7-h5, a typical case shown in diagram 20:

Black has accomplished his plan, albeit at the cost of a considerable amount of time. The knight stands beautifully on f5, but if White manages to exchange it, the disadvantages involved in ... h7-h5 will become



apparent. A thematic continuation would be 1 ♖e2 ♗d7 2 ♗g3 g6 3 ♗xf5 gxf5 4 ♗e5 ♗e7 5 h4! inflicting some permanent changes on the character of the game:



Black's outpost on f5 has disappeared, in return for the opening of the g-file. However, White's control of g5 nullifies Black's attacking chances, so what counts in the long run is the weakness on h5 as well as the minority of the black King. To take advantage of these factors, White should try to open up the game on the queenside as quickly as possible.

The Caro Advance is a dy-

namic opening, but hardly an anti-positional one. Not rarely, White sacrifices a pawn at an early stage for concrete positional gains.

The following example is quite characteristic after the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 Bb6 5 Qd3 Qxd3 6 Bxd3 e6 7 Qge2 Qe7 8 0-0 Qd7 9 e4 e6 10 Bb3 Qf5 11 a5 Bb8 12 Qd1 c5 13 c4 dxc4 14 d5 Bb4 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 Bc3 Qd4 17 Qxd4 Bxd4 18 Bb3 Bxe5 19 Qc3 Qe7 20 Qxc4 Bb5 21 b3 we have reached the position in diagram 22 (extensive analysis of this specific sequence is provided in Game 15, Kotrońsz-Tukmakov).



White is a pawn down, but his knight is ideally placed on c4, eyeing the weak dark squares on Black's queenside. Black's b- and c-pawns are practically isolated and his e-pawn irremediably weak. Although it cannot be claimed with any certainty that White enjoys an advantage here, it is

obvious that the burden of proof lies on Black's side.

A difficult problem one has to solve during over the board play is the question of exchanges. The main reason for this is that the relative value of each minor piece is sensitive, in view of the complicated and constantly transforming pawn structures. Mastering this subject requires the development of one's intuition, together with knowledge of some typical cases.

A) Exchange of Light-Squared Bishops

Referring to this exchange has surely become a routine, but the careful reader must have noticed the reason for such an attitude: exchanging one's own good bishop is against the principles of classical theory, so it is of major importance to explain how this is balanced by other factors. A most enlightening case occurs as early as the fourth move (see diagram 23).



The normal continuation for Black would be 4 ... e6, demanding a deep knowledge of the complications arising after 5 g4 Qe6 6 Qe2 c5 7 h4. However, if the second player is reluctant to enter this line he may try a semi-waiting move such as 4 ... Bb6 or 4 ... h5. Then 5 Qd3 becomes feasible, but only because Black was first to violate a so-called classical rule: 4 ... Bb6 commits the queen too early, while 4 ... h5 weakens Black's kingside without furthering his development. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the 'anti-positional' 5 Qd3 should work, as after 5 ... Qxd3 6 Bxd3 Black's only developed piece is removed and White's queen is given access to the weakened sector. In fact, 4 ... Bb6 creates no weaknesses in the structural sense, but the queen's absence from the kingside will probably make itself felt later on.

Exchanging the light-squared bishops is also justified if White has induced a favourable fixing of Black's kingside pawns. A relevant case appears in the following situation (diagram 24).

White plays 1 Qd3 in order to get rid of the annoying bishop on h7. After 1 ... Qxd3 2 Bxd3 the position is similar to diagram 19, Black's weaknesses being vulnerable not only in the resulting middle-



game, but in an ending as well.

B) Exchange of a Strongly Placed Knight

This is another recurring theme, as Black quite often establishes his knight on f5 in order to halt White's kingside aggression. White normally tries to exchange it, diagrams 20 and 21 featuring the starting position as well as results of such an effort. For more details see the next section.

C) Other Exchanges

Sometimes, Black gives up his dark-squared bishop for a white knight on c3. Like its distant relative from the Winawer, this exchange aims at a weakening of White's pawn structure, hoping to exploit it at a later stage. Under specific circumstances Black may succeed, but in general the fortification of White's centre, in conjunction with the usual time advantage he enjoys in the Advance Caro, allows him to exploit the bishop vs knight

advantage.

Finally, ideas for White to trade his inferior bishop are not always out of the question, diagram 25 offering a typical example.



White can play 1 Qe3 & Qg5 is better, but only for tactical reasons - see the analysis of Kotronius-Orr, included in Game 19 carrying out the strategic plan already outlined during the discussion of diagram 16. Exchanging this bishop means that he will not have to worry any more about drifting in a worse ending, albeit at the disadvantage of easing Black's cramp a little.

Manoeuvres

The Caro Advance is an opening variation noted for its dynamism and versatility. There is no manoeuvring in the traditional sense, as the whole board is in an almost permanent state of flux and in almost every game we witness a body-to-body fight between the two armies. Thus, there are

no concrete positional targets in most of the sharp lines arising in the Advance Variation and this explains the lack of standard manoeuvres, contrary to openings such as the Tarrasch Defence in the Queen's Gambit, the Simisch Variation of the Nimzo-Indian, etc.

The only lines where play takes a more or less positional character are those arising after an early exchange of the light-squared bishops. These positions require a different kind of approach, since the customary pawn storms would now fail to impress Black; his position is sufficiently solid to meet this kind of activity by setting up a successful blockade on the light squares. If White underestimates this fact he will soon run out of play on the kingside, as in the classic game Nimzowitsch-Capablanca, New York 1927:



White's careless demonstration has ended up in a complete strategic disaster. Black has not only conquered the square

f5 for his knight but, more importantly, has turned the tables as far as king safety is concerned. After 1 ... 0-0 2 Qd4 e6 3 f2 f8. Capablanca went on to win by penetrating through the c-file (the whole game is extensively analysed later on as Game 12, with some significant suggestions about misconceptions that have endured for decades regarding its opening stages).

Similar accidents are to be avoided if White understands the needs of the position for piece manoeuvring. Most of these manoeuvres aim at challenging Black's control of the f5 square, while others are associated with the idea of exerting pressure on Black's kingside.

In diagram 20 we made our first acquaintance with the above-mentioned type of manoeuvre. White resorted to Qc3-e2-g3 which, as it turns out, has a two-fold purpose: to unblock the c-pawn for central action and to underline the weakness created by the move ... h7-h5. This manoeuvre signals the start of Black's difficulties, as after the normal continuation 1 Qe2 Qd7 2 Qg3 he has to make a positional concession.

In the diagrammed position, Black is faced with the unpleasant dilemma of either opening up the f-file for White



by 1 ... Qxg3 2 fxg3, or allowing the weakening of his pawn structure after 1 ... g6 2 Qxd5 gxf5. The first choice is clearly inferior as 1 ... Qxg3 2 fxg3 Qe7 runs into 3 h4! with a dangerous attacking position for White. In that case the shortcomings of ... h7-h5 become particularly felt, since the g5 point turns into a fearsome base of operations in White's hands.

The lesser evil is 1 ... g6. After 2 Qxf5 gxf5 3 Qg3 Qe7 4 h4 we reach a position that has been briefly discussed under diagram 21.

White's manoeuvre has paid off well, as he has obtained a firm grip on the kingside. Black's only counterplay is based on the fact that the guard of the g-file has been removed and an avenue towards the white king has been opened, but the plan ... Qd7-f8-h7 would be too slow to enjoy realistic chances of success. In the meantime White may generate play on the queenside, a

sample line being 4 ... ♘f8 5 b4 ♘h7 15 ... ♘g6 6 g3 f4 7 b5±; 5 ... b5? 6 a4±) 6 ♘xe7 ♘ee7 7 b5 cxb5 (7 ... c5 8 c4±; 7 ... ♗c8 8 c4±) 8 ♗xb5+ ♘d7 9 ♗fb1 with an endgame advantage due to the weakness on h5.

In some lines we have a slightly different configuration of White's pieces, the king's knight standing on e2 instead of f3. Although ♘g1-e2 seems artificial, it has the advantageous point of allowing a queen transfer to the kingside, presumably on h3. From that square the queen may help in evicting the black knight from f5.



With 1 g4 White exploits the pin on the h-file, forcing Black to admit that occupying f5 was premature. After 1 ... ♘e7 2 ♘g3 g6 3 ♗g5 the position is clearly in White's favour.

A disadvantage entailed in ♘g1-e2 is that it hinders the common manoeuvre ♘c3-e2-g3 aiming to exchange the knight

on f5 under favourable conditions. Although there is another route to do this by ♘c3-df-e3, it is not always as efficient, the following example being the proof:



On 1 ♘d1 Black responds with 1 ... c5, nipping in the bud the desired manoeuvre. White is forced to go in for wild complications with 2 c4 cxd4 3 cxd5 ♘xe5 4 dxe6 fxe6 5 ♘f4 ♗f6 6 ♗el, although his knight on d1 is a passive spectator for the time being. However, note that if White's bishop were still on its original square (as in diagram 8) he would enjoy a winning advantage in view of the extra possibility ♗h3-b3.

The type of game featured in the last few diagrams bears a close resemblance to positions from the French. In this respect, a knight on e2 might prove conveniently placed, as it suits White's plan to apply kingside pressure with the aid of his cavalry. The queen on h3 proves a useful coordinator of

the play, supporting the knights' manoeuvres in tactical fashion:



White starts with 1 ♘f4, toying with the ideas ♘f4-h5 and ♘f4xe6. Black would like to neutralize White's initiative by playing 1 ... ♘g6, but this is out of the question in view of the simple 2 ♘g6, winning material. Also bad is 1 ... c5 2 ♘b5 ♘c6 3 ♘xe6 which merely helps to underline the powerful rôle of the queen on h3. Therefore, 1 ... ♘f5 is called for, although it does not really shake off White's grip on the position, after 2 ♘e2 White completes his manoeuvre in an efficient way, preparing to meet 2 ... c5 with 3 c4, opening up the game for his own benefit.

The lack of typical manoeuvres in the hair-raising complications resulting after 3 ... ♗f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 has already been mentioned. An instructive piece of manoeuvring is the consolidating knight tour from diagram 4, but this is an iso-

lated case depending upon the peculiarities of a specific situation. A rare instance of a motif applying in different lines involves manoeuvring with the king's rook along the third rank.

Consider the following case:



This position has been reached after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♗g6 6 ♘ge2 c5 7 h4 h5 8 ♘f4 ♘h7 9 ♘xb5 cxd4 10 ♗xd4 ♘c6 11 ♗b5 ♘ge7 12 ♗h6 e6 13 ♘xc6+ ♘xc6 14 ♗f4 ♗g8 15 0-0-0 ♗u5 (for a comprehensive coverage of the introductory moves consult Game 6, van der Wiel-icklick). Black has a strong attack in view of the open c-file and the activity of his pieces, but White is not without resources: with 16 ♗h3! the king's rook is brought efficiently into the game, not only supporting his vulnerable queenside but also preparing to add pressure on f7 by ♗h3-f3.

Similar rook manoeuvres can be encountered in ... f7-f6 lines, as well as in the main 6 ... c5

line, resulting after 6 ... c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3 Qb6 etc. The main purpose of such a manoeuvre in these cases is defensive, a characteristic example being the following one. (32)



This position could have arisen in the game Prasad-Ravi, India 1991. Play had begun 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4 Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qg2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 Qe3 Qb6 9 f4 Qc6 10 f5

Qh7 11 Qd2 0-0-0 12 0-0-0 c6 13 Qf4 Qa6 14 fxe6 Qb4 15 exf7, and now 15 ... Qxa2? 16 Qxa2 Qxa2 17 Qc3 Qe4 18 fxe6 Qxg6 19 Qh3 a5 would have reached the diagram.

Black has sacrificed a piece for what seems to be a virulent attack, but the rook on h3 proves its defensive value. After 20 Qg1 Qb4 21 Qa3! Qxa3 22 Qxa3 White repulses all threats, entering an easily won ending.

At this point Chapter 1 of this book comes to an end, but it should be well digested before proceeding further: the ideas presented here are essential for a proper understanding of the opening lines suggested in the rest of the book.

2 The 4 ... e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qg2 Variation

In the past few years the Advance Variation against the Caro has been seen more and more often at top level chess. GMs Timman, Short, Anand and Nunn have been its main adherents. Their results have been mixed, but on the whole, I think, White has satisfactory play.

The system characterized by the move 4 Qc3 has recently fallen out of favour. However, a decline in popularity is not always the result of any fault of the opening: in this particular case the new plan with Qd1-f3, Qf1-e2 has scored well in practice, and consequently the attention of most Advance devotees has been drawn away from the 'old' line. I believe that such a tendency is not justified in terms of objective thinking. The variations starting with 4 Qc3 are extremely rich in possibilities and definitely constitute the sharpest method available in White's arsenal. Black has to be superbly prepared in order to weather the storm at the early stages, but even that could prove insuffi-

cient against someone who has delved deeper into the intricacies of the position.

Alternatives to 6 ... c5 (Games 1-4)

Game 1 Vasylukov - Razuvaev USSR 1981

1	e4	c6
2	d4	d5
3	e5	Qf5
4	Qc3	e6
5	g4	

With 5 g4 White declares his intentions for a complicated fight: he plans a development of his knight to e2, followed by a massive advance of his king-side pawns. The point of such a strategy lies in the insecure position of Black's bishop which White should exploit by either forcing Black to accept a weakness in his pawn structure or by gaining enough time to build a space advantage.

5	...	Qg6
6	Qg2 (33)	
6	...	Qb4?!

The most usual contin-



tions 6...f6 and 6...c5 are illustrated extensively in subsequent games. Other moves have failed to bring Black joy:

a) 6...♞h4? 7 Qe3! (sacrificing the pawn as on 7...♞g4?, 8 ♞d2 to be followed by 9 0-0-0 gives excellent compensation; worse is 7 ♡f4 ♡h6 8 h3 ♡b4 9 ♡d2 ♞e7 10 ♡e2 ♡d2+ 11 ♞e2 ♞e7 as played in van der Wiel-Timmer, Brussels SWIFT blitz 1987 7... ♡h6 8 ♡xh6! gxb6 9 ♡g3 ♡e7 10 f4 f6 11 ♡g2 and Black's position is riddled with weaknesses, Blumenfeld-Kasparian, USSR 1931.

b) 6... ♡e7? is analysed extensively in Game 2, Minasian-Miles.

c) Finally, 6... h6 7 h4 c5 transposes to 6...c5.

7 h4

Interesting, but probably inferior to the text is 7 a3?, despite White's success in the game dos Santos-Wallace, Guarapuava 1991, which continued 7... ♡c3+ 8 ♡xc3 h5 9 h4 hxg4 10 ♞xg4 ♡e7 11 h5 ♞h7 12

♡d3 ♡d3 13 cxd3 ♡f5 14 ♡e3 ♡d7 15 0-0-0 ♞c7 16 ♞b1 0-0-0 (34)



17 ♡xh5 ♡xh6 18 ♞d5 ecf5 19 ♡xc7 ♡g4 20 ♡b5 cxb5 21 ♞d+ ♞d7 22 ♞c5 ♞b6 23 ♡g5 f6 24 ♞c+ ♞e7 25 ♞e7+ ♞e8 26 ♡f4 ♡xf2 27 ♞e7 ♡xd3 28 ♡d2 ♞h5 29 ♞e7+ ♞h8 30 ♡c3 ♡f4 31 ♞h7 e6 32 ♞g7 ♡d5 33 ♡e5 ♞e8 34 ♞d7 f4 35 ♡d8 f3 36 ♡d6+ ♡d6 37 ♞c6 ♞h+ 38 ♡e2 ♞d3 39 e5 ♞e8 40 ♡g6+ ♞h8 41 ♞c6 ♞e8 42 ♞d7 ♞e8 43 ♞d3 ♞f3 44 ♞d3 ♡d5 45 ♞b6 e5 46 ♞b3 ♞d+ 47 ♡e2 ♞d5 48 ♡e6 ♞f7? (Black could have drawn with 48... a4) and White won on move 63. Despite the final result, it is clear that 7 h4 is a much safer move than 7 a3. With the latter, White adopted a risky strategy involving many pawn weaknesses and Black's play could certainly be improved upon.

Another move that has been essayed by White in this position is 7 ♡f4, but it does not seem to be particularly dangerous. The game Djurbausz-

Foosan, Stavanger 1989, continued 7... ♡e7 8 h4 h6 9 h5 ♡d4 10 f3 ♡h7 11 ♡d3 ♡d7 12 ♡d2 ♞c7 13 ♡d7 ♞h7 14 ♡ce 2 ♡d2+ 15 ♞e2 e5 16 c3 0-0-0 17 ♡d3 ♡c6 with an equal game.

7... ♡e4
8 ♞h3 h5??

A dubious experiment. According to Vassukov, Black should have been content with the modest 8... h6. In the next few moves White takes advantage of Black's adventurous play in simple and powerful fashion.

9 ♡g3! (35)



9... c5

In the game Lee-Petersen, Diem 1989, Black vated with 9... hxg4 10 ♞xg4 ♡e7, getting a good position after 11 ♡h5? ♞d7 and the game ending as a draw after 12 ♡d3 ♡d3 13 ♞d3 ♡f5 14 ♡g5 ♡e7 15 ♞f3 g6 16 ♡f6+ ♡e7 17 0-0-0 ♡d7 18 ♞f4 ♡f6 19 ecf6 ♡d6 20 ♞g4 ♡c2 21 ♞d3 ♞d5 22 ♡e2. Yet I find it hard to believe 9... hxg4 is good, as White may

continue instead of 11 ♡h5? 11 ♡xe4 dxe4 12 ♞e4 ♡f5 (what else? 13 ♡g3 and Black is in dire straits. For example, after 13... ♞d4? there follows 14 ♞e4 ♡d4 15 0-0-0, while 13... ♡e7 also fails after 14 0-0-0 ♡g5+ 15 hxg5 ♞d3 16 ♡d3 ♞xg5+ 17 f4.

10 ♡g5 f6

Practically forced; if 10... ♞b6 11 a2 and now:

a) 11... ♡c3+ 12 bxc3 hxg4 13 ♡xe4 gxd3 14 ♡g6+ ♞f8 15 ♞h4; or

b) 11... hxg4 12 ecf4 gxd3 13 dxc4, according to Day.

11 ♡d2 ♡xc3
12 bxc3 ♡c6
13 ecf6 gxf6
14 ♡xe4 dxe4
15 ♞e2 (36)



White's superiority is evident. He has two far-ranging bishops and Black's central pawn formation is loose 15... f5 16 gdf5 ecf5 16 ♞e4 is very unpleasant for Black, so he has no choice but to sacrifice his front e-pawn.

15... ♞d7

16 ♖xe4 0-0-0
 Vasiukov adds a question mark to this move and proposes instead 16 ... hxe4 17 ♖e6 ♖f7 18 ♗g4 0-0-0 as a better try. However I cannot see how Black defends after 19 ♘c4 f5 20 ♗e2 ♗e8 21 ♗c3 ♗d4 22 0-0-0. In fact, the ugly 18 ... f5 might be the sole chance of holding on.

17 g5!

From now on White's game plays itself, as Black has no real counterplay on either flank.

17 ... ♘g7

In a bad position every move is bad and the same applies here, as on 17 ... f5 White's reply 18 ♗d3 (preparing to meet 18 ... ♘g7 with 19 ♗c4) leaves no doubts about the final outcome. Black can hardly open up the position with 18 ... cxd4 or 18 ... e5, since in both cases his knights would be no match for the powerful white bishops.

18 gxf6 ♘f5
 19 ♗d3 cxd4
 20 cxd4 ♗h8
 21 ♗g5 ♗b4
 22 ♗d2 ♖b8
 23 ♗b1 ♘d5
 24 e4

Preparing to double rooks on the b-line. Normally one would sacrifice material to achieve such a position, but here White is two pawns up!

24 ... ♘b6

25 e5 ♘d5
 26 ♗db2 ♖a8
 27 f7 ♗xf7
 28 ♗xd8 ♗xd8
 29 ♗xb7 ♗f6

On 29 ... ♗b7 there follows 30 ♗xb7 ♖b7 31 ♗a6 ♘xd4 32 ♗e6 ♖a8 33 ♗f7, mating quickly.

30 ♗d3 1-0

Black resigned as he cannot meet the threat of mate starting with 31 ♗a7+.

Game 2

Minaian - Miles
 Moscow GMA 1989

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2 6 ... ♘e7

This is Miles' pet line, with which he has suffered a number of reverses. Black wants to prevent h2-h4 even at the cost of impeding the development of his king's knight; in fact, Black hopes that he will be able to exploit the weak side of e6 by ... h7-h5, after which his knight can be deployed to f5 via h6.

7 ♘e3

Besides the game continuation, the following options are possible for White:

a) 7 ♘f4 c5 8 dxc5 d4 9 ♘c6g6 hxe6 10 ♘e4 ♗e5 11 ♘c5 ♗h5 12 ♘b7 ♗d1 13 ♘d6 ♖f8 with an unclear position in Nunn-Chandler, Wiesbaden 1981.

b) 7 ♘g2 ♘d7 8 0-0 h5 9 ♘f4 hxe4 10 ♘c6 fxe6 11 ♗e4 ♘f8 12 ♘e2 ♘b6 13 ♗b6 ♗b6 14 h3 ♗d3 15 ♗d1 e5 16 c4 ♗h4 17 h3 ♗hxe4 18 hxe4 g5 19 f4 gxf4 20 ♘e4 ♗7 21 ♘f5 ♗e2 22 ♗f4 ♗e5 23 ♗f3 ♗b6 24 ♗e1 ♘b7 25 cxd5 cxd5 26 ♘f4 ♗e4 27 ♗e4 ♗c8 28 ♗f2 ♗+ 29 ♗f1 ♘e5 30 ♗g2 ♖f7 31 ♗e6 ♖e7 32 ♗d3 ♗b6 33 ♗e2 ♗a2+ 34 ♗a2 ♗h8 35 ♗g6 ♖d7 36 ♗f1 ♗e6 37 ♗b1 ♗h4 38 ♗g3 ♗h3+ 39 ♗f4 ♘f7 40 ♗e6 ♘h8 41 ♗g5 ♗h8 42 ♗h5 ♖e7 43 ♗e6 ♗f8 44 ♗c1 ♘b6 45 ♗e7 ♗f4 46 g5 ♗d4 47 g6 ♗e6 48 ♗e7+ ♖b6 49 ♗b7 ♗d2 50 ♗e6 ♖e7 51 ♗b7+ ♖b6 52 ♖h6 ♘e6 53 ♘e6 ♗a2 54 ♗e6 e5 55 ♗g5 ♗e2+ 56 ♗f5 ♗e2+ 57 ♗e4 e4 58 ♗d7+ ♖e6 59 ♗d8 ♖e6 60 ♗c6 ♗e2+ and ♗-h4 in van der Wiel-Miles, Ter Apel 1987.

Nunn's 7 ♘f4 is logical and clearly more testing than 7 ♘g2, but Minaian's move looks more flexible than both these alternatives.

c) 7 ♗h3! (a suggestion from the author; the idea behind this weird-looking move being to support the advance f2-f4-f5 7 ... h5 critical but risky; however after 7 ... ♗b4 8 ♘g3 planning a2-a3 and 0-0 White keeps a slight advantage, while 7 ... ♘d7 8 f4 ♗b4 for 8 ... ♗h4 9 ♘g3 threatening f4-f5 9 0-0 ♗h4 10 ♗g2 h5! 11 g3 ♘e7 12 ♘g3 leaves the black queen imprisoned in enemy territory)

8 ♘f4 hxe4 9 ♗xg4! ♗b7 (9 ... ♗f2 10 ♗d5 ecf5 11 e6!) 10 ♘e6! 10 ... ♗e7! is also interesting) 10 ... fxe6 11 ♗e6 ♗b4 12 ♖h5+! g6 13 ♖h3 (37)



White's attack is more than enough compensation for the missing piece. Therefore, researchers should turn their attention to the continuation 11 ... ♗d4! 12 ♗f3!, the consequences of which are unclear.

7 ... ♘d7
 8 ♗d2 h5
 9 ♘f4 hxe4
 10 ♘e6 fxe6
 11 ♘d3

Another option here is 11 h3 ♘f8 12 0-0-0 ♗h5 13 a3 b5 14 ♘e2 ♗e2+ 15 ♗e2 e5 16 ♘c1 ♖f7 17 ♘d3 ♗h4 18 ♗e2 ♘b6 19 hxe4 ♗xg4 20 ♗f3 ♗b4 21 ♗h4 ♗d4 22 ♗h1 ♘e7 23 ♖e2 ♘f5 24 ♗g4 b4 25 a4 ♘d7 26 ♗e1 from Kaszky-Miles, New York 1989, where White had good compensation for the pawn but, despite the final outcome, 26 ... ♗h8 27 c3 b3 28 c4 ♘b6 29 cxd5 cxd5 30 ♗e7 ♗e6 31 ♗e7 ♗xa4

32 ♘d5 gxf5 33 ♘g5 ♖e8 34 ♘f2 ♖e8 35 ♘e6 g5 36 ♘b4 ♖e8 37 ♘d6 ♖f8 38 ♖xb3 ♘d6 39 cxd5 ♖d8 40 ♖b4 ♘b2 41 ♖xb2 ♖xb6 42 ♖b6 ♖e7 43 ♖g8 g4 44 ♖g7 ♖f6 45 ♖g1 ♖b6 46 ♘e5 ♖a4 47 ♖g4 ♖e7 48 ♖e3 f4 49 ♖d3 ♖b3 50 ♖e2 ♖a4 51 ♖c3 g3 52 ♖g3 ♖g3 53 ♖d3 ♖a3 54 ♖e2 ♖b3 55 ♖f1 ♖f8 56 ♖e2 ♖b4 57 ♖g4 and 1-0.

11 ... ♘f8

Black's idea becomes apparent: this knight will defend the weak pawns, enabling the rest of his pieces to take up important posts on the kingside (principally the other knight on f5). Since the fight usually revolves around the mutual weaknesses existing there, a successful blockade by Black would automatically grant him significant winning chances. However, it is impossible to achieve these aims if White plays energetically.

12 0-0-0

Interesting is 12 ♘e2? which deprives Black of the option given in the next note. Although this lets Black develop his knight to h6 without the preliminary ... ♖h8-h4, this might not be significant after 12 ... ♘h6 13 0-0-0 ♘f5 14 c4? when it's not clear how Black can profit from the omission of the rook move.

12 ... ♖h4

12 ... ♘h6? would be met by

13 ♖d1 or 13 h3, with a clear advantage for White in both cases, for example, after 13 h3, Zapolskis - Furdak, Churudim 1992 continued 13 ... gdx3 14 ♖b3 ♖g8 15 ♘b6 gdx6 16 ♖g1 ♖d7 17 ♖h6 ♖e8 18 ♖f4 ♖e7 19 ♘e2 (cf Zapolskis).

However, in preparing ... ♘g8-h6, Miles misses a chance to prevent the knight manoeuvre that follows. According to Dokholan, it was possible to play 12 ... ♖d1? 13 ♖d1 ♖h1 with an unclear position, although even here Zapolskis' 13 ♖e2 casts doubt on this assessment, e.g. 13 ... ♖h4 14 f3 gxf3 15 ♖b3 ♘h6 16 ♘f2 ♘e5 17 ♖b1 ♖f4 18 ♖g2 ♖e8 19 ♘e2 ♖g4 20 ♖f3 ♖e7 21 h3 ♖e5 22 ♖d3 ♖f5 23 ♘d5f4, or 13 ... ♖b4 14 ♘d2 intending a3h.

13 ♘e2± ♘h6

14 c4 ♘f5?

Another Dokholan suggestion here is 14 ... ♖d7 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 ♘e5 16 ♖e7? 16 ... ♘g5 17 ♖g5 ♖e7 18 ♖g6 ♖d7. After Miles' error, White is winning.

15 ♘f4 ♖f7

16 ♖b1 ♘d7

17 cxd5 cxd5

18 ♘g2 ♖h8

It is evident that Black's troops have become disorganized in the last few moves. The fact that he has to play such moves as 16 ... ♘d7 and 18 ... ♖h8 speaks fluently about the failure of his strategy.



21 ♘xg6+? ♘xg6
22 ♘f4+ ♖f7
23 ♖h5+ ♖g8
24 ♘xg6 ♖e8?

A better defensive try was 24 ... ♖b6. Black's congested pieces cannot provide their king with real protection.

25 ♖d1± ♘f8

26 ♖xh3 ♘f7

27 ♖f5 ♖e8

28 ♖xh8+ ♘xh8

29 ♘xg7 ♘xg7

30 ♖h6 ♖cl+

31 ♖xcl 1-0

Game 3

Kotronias - Sax

Burgas - Elente 1992

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2

6 ... ♖f7? ♖g9

This is the main alternative to the most usual continuation 6 ... c5. Black provides his bishop with a retreat square on f7 while hitting White's central pawn wedge.



7 h4

7 ♘f4 was supposed to be the main line but my research indicates that it's probably worse than 7 h4. Known to theory is 7 ... ♘f7 8 ♖e2?, from Timman-Amnd, Amsterdam 1992, which gave White an edge after 8 ... h6 9 ♖a5 ♘d7 10 ♖e2 ♖e7 11 ♘d3 ♘g6 12 h4! (the position is much better for White, according to Timman) 12 ... ♘d3 13 ♖b3 e5 14 ♘e5 ♖f7 15 0-0-0 ♘d6 16 d6 17 ♖e2 (Timman considers this second-rate, suggesting 16 ♖g3 16 ... ♘e5 17 ♖e2 ♖f2 18 ♖d3 (?) by Timman, who offers instead 18 ♖e1? ♖h4 19 ♖d3 ♖e7-) 18 ... ♘f3 19 ♖e3 ♘h6 20 ♖e4 (?) again by Timman) 20 ... ♘e5 21 ♘e5 ♘xg5 22 ♖g5 ♘xg4 23 ♘d3 g6 h6 Black ought to win! 24 ♖e4 0-0 25 ♖e5 ♖f6 26 ♖h4 b6 27 ♖g4 bxc5 28 c3 ♖h8? (the immediate 28 ... c5-c4 would have given Black a clear advantage) 29 ♖e2 c4 30 ♖d4 dxc4 31 ♖e4 ♖f8 32 ♖a5 ♖d2+ 33 ♖e2 ♖a2+ 34 ♖a2 ♖b5 35 ♖e2 ♖f7 36 ♖e4 ♖e5 37

♗d2 ♖e6 38 ♖e3 ♖e+ 39 ♗d4 ♗e2 40 ♗c4 ♗e2 41 e4 ♗f5 42 ♗g1 and ♗-e.

The reason I did not choose this line against Sax is that Black can respond with 7 ... ♗e5! and now:

a) 8 ♗e6 ♗e7 9 ♗d8 ecd4+ 10 ♗e2 dxc3 11 ♗e6 hcg6 12 ... cxd2? 12 ♗e2 hcg6 13 ♗d4 led to an initiative for White in Efimov-Vidovin, USSR 1980 12 ♗e3 ♗f6 13 ♗xc3 ♗b7 14 ♗e3 ♗e4 was unclear in Nuzar-Andersson, London 1982.

b) 8 ♗e6 hcg6 9 dxc3 ♗d7 10 ♗f4 dxc3 11 ♗d3 ♗e7 12 ♗e3 ♗e7 13 ♗e4 e5 14 ♗d2 b? 14 ... ♗b4 15 c3 b5 16 cxb4 cxb4 17 ♗c3 bxc3 18 ♗xc3 ♗e47 van der Wiel 15 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 16 ♗e5 ♗h6 17 ♗e3 ♗xc3+ 18 cxd3 c5 19 ♗e1 ♗e8 20 0-0 and ♗-e in Sax-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1984.

c) 8 dxc5 ♗f7 9 ♗e2 19 h4 ♗d7 10 ♗d3 h5 11 ♗e3 ♗e5 12 ♗d2 ♗e7 is also unclear, Kinley-Friedmann, England 1980 9 ... ♗d7? (risky is 9 ... c5 10 ♗xc5 ecd5 11 e6 ♗e6 12 ♗e6 hcg6 13 ♗f3, Fabri-Carpasi, corr. 1983, with White obtaining a strong initiative for the sacrificed material) 10 h4 ♗e7 11 ♗c3 h5 12 the best, since after 11 ... c5 12 ♗xc5? ♗e6 13 ♗f4 0-0-0 13 ... ♗e7 14 ♗e2 ♗xc5 15 ♗d5 ecd5 16 ecd+ 14 ♗h3 ecd5 15 e6 ♗e6 15 ... ♗e6 16 ♗e3 16 ♗e6 ♗xc6+ 17 ♗e6 ♗e6 18 ♗h3 d4 19 ♗e2 White keeps a slight edge) gaining perfectly satis-

factory play, e.g. 12 e5 ♗e7 13 ♗h3 c5 14 ♗e2 e6 and White is running out of steam.

7 ... ♗e5!

This is better than the immediate 7 ... ♗d7. The game Stashev-Slavov, Bulgarian Ch (Pazardzhik) 1991, saw an interesting tactical struggle after 8 f4 h5 9 f5 ♗f7 10 ♗f4 ♗e5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗e6 ♗g6 13 ♗e6 ♗xc6 14 gdx5 ♗e5 15 ♗e2 ♗f6 16 ♗e2 ♗c4 16!



17 ♗xc5 ecd5 18 ♗d5 ♗b4+ 19 c3 ♗xc3+ 20 bxc3 ♗xc3+ 21 ♗h1 ♗e7 22 ♗xc4 0-0- is rare instance of castling short with check! 23 ♗e2 ♗c8 24 ♗e5 ♗xc4 25 ♗e1 ♗e+ 26 ♗e4 ♗e2+ 27 ♗h3 ♗e3+ 28 ♗e2 ♗e2+ 29 ♗h3 ♗e3+ 30 ♗e2 ♗e2+ 31 ♗h3 ♗e3+ and ♗-e. White was probably better in the complications, but nevertheless the move 8 h5 ought to be preferred as it secures an advantage without any particular risks. The game Marjanović-Skembis, Pazarevo Z 1987 continued 8 ... ♗f7 9 exf1 (less convincing is 9 f4 ♗b6 10 ♗h3

0-0-0 11 a3 c5 12 ♗f4 ♗e5+ 13 c3 ♗e7 14 ♗xc5 dxc5 15 dxc5 ♗xc5 16 ♗d4 ♗e8 17 ♗e3 e6 18 ♗b3 ♗d7 19 ♗d4 ♗e7 20 exf6 ♗e6 21 ♗e7 ♗e8 22 0-0-0 ♗e8 with an unclear position in Moutoussis-Nikolaïdis, Greek Ch (Athens) 1988, although White's play could be improved, e.g. 17 ♗e3 9 ... gxf6 10 f4 ♗e7 11 ♗d3 e5 12 ♗h3 ecd4 13 ♗e2 ♗b6 14 ♗d3 ♗e7 15 ♗h1 and White's prospects are clearly better: Marjanović went on to win after 15 ... f5 16 gdf5 ♗h6 17 ♗d4 ♗d5 18 ♗g3 0-0-0 19 ♗h4 ♗f8 20 ♗d6 ♗d6 21 ♗f4 ♗de8 22 ♗d2.

Taking everything into account, transposing to the next chapter with 7 ... c5 may be best for Black.

8 h5 ♗f7
9 dxc5 ♗e7

This move is out of place here. Normally e7 should be reserved for the development of the king's knight, therefore 9 ... ♗b4!7, played in Westerman-Groszpetter, Copenhagen 1988, seems more logical. The game continued 10 ♗e2 ♗e7 11 f4 ♗d7 12 ♗d2 ♗e7 13 ♗d4 ♗b6 14 a3 ♗e5 15 ♗e6 ♗xc6 16 b4 ♗d4 17 bxc5 0-0 18 ♗h1 ♗d4+, but it is obvious that White's play could be improved at several points. The main strategic problem is that White's bishop bites on g2, therefore 1 suggest the alternative plan 10

f4 ♗e7 11 a3 ♗e5 12 b4? ♗b6 13 ♗d4 ♗d7 13 ... a5 14 ♗b6 13 ... ♗d4!7 is critical but very committal as Black is left with an atrocious bishop on f7 14 ♗f3 h6 15 ♗d3 when the bishop eyes both flanks and is ready to assist various attacking schemes.

For 9 ... ♗d7, see Game 4, Marjanović-Campora.

10 ♗e2

10 f4 is impossible on account of 10 ... ♗b4+, but White does not mind developing his bishop on g2 now since 9 ... ♗e7 has created a lot of traffic problems in Black's camp.

10 ... ♗b4!

Sax's idea is to continue with ... ♗g8-h6, ... ♗b8-d7, putting pressure on both e5 and f2. However, this plan is too artificial to enjoy any chance of success.

11 ♗d2

A simple refutation. The threat of g4-g5 prevents ... ♗g8-h6 and forces either 11 ... h6 or the bishop's retreat to e7. In both cases White has succeeded in rendering Black's plan impossible.

11 ... ♗e7

The bishop retreats empty-handed, Black's sole gain being the strange-looking position of White's queen. After 11 ... h6 White could continue in a way similar to the game.

12 ♗e3!

Improving the position of

the queen and at the same time stopping ... c6-c5 (12 ... c5? 13 ♘xd5 exd5 14 e6). White already enjoys an undisputed advantage in view of his lead in development and the lack of harmony in Black's position.

12 ... ♘d7
13 b3! ♖a5

White's last move revealed his intention of following up with ♘c1-b2 and 0-0-0, thus discouraging Black from 13 ... ♘b6 14 ♘b2 c5? which would merely weaken d5. Better, however, was 13 ... ♖b6 14 ♖g3 0-0-0 (14 ... d4? 15 ♘e4 ♖a5 15 ♘d2 ♖ba5 16 f4 ♖e7 17 ♘xd4 only makes things worse), as Black would then have more fighting chances than in the actual game.

14 ♘d2 ♖c5
15 ♘d4 b5 (10)



16 f4

Setting in motion the pawn mass on the kingside. Unable to prevent the unpleasant threat of f4-f5, Black hurries to pin the knight on d4 in an effort to minimize its conse-

quences.

16 ... ♖b6
17 f5 ♘c5
18 ♘ce2 0-0-0
19 b4 ♘xd4
20 ♘xd4 ♖e8
21 0-0-0 ♘b6
22 ♖c3!

Not surprisingly, White's pressure has increased at a very fast pace. 22 ♖c3 creates numerous threats which can only be met by another forced move on Black's part.

22 ... ♘xe5
23 fxe6 ♘xe6
24 ♘xe6 ♖xe6
25 ♘d5 ♖ee8?

Slightly better was 25 ... ♖e7, although White would still be winning.

26 g5 ♘f5

After 26 ... ♘g4 27 ♖g1! the black knights would be tied up defending each other. In great time-trouble, the Hungarian Grandmaster and twice Candidate correctly tries to centralize as much as possible; however, his efforts do not have the desired effect in view of White's dominant bishops.

27 ♘f4 ♖c7

28 ♘e4!

Not fearing 28 ... ♘d3+ 29 cxd3 with a winning position for White.

28 ... ♖hf8

29 ♖hf1+ (42)

White has a dream position: both bishops point menacingly at Black's weakened queenside



and his heavy pieces are also excellently placed, applying strong pressure on the open files; in contrast, Black's queen and rooks are tied to the defence of their cavalry, passively awaiting an inevitable loss of material.

29 ... ♘d6?

Trying to complicate the issue, 29 ... g6 is not better in view of 30 ♘h2 (Dorfman), and White has acquired the extra possibility of creating a dangerous passed pawn on the kingside after ♘e4xf5.

30 ♘d3! ♘xc4

Despair, but Black had to lose something anyway.

31 ♘xc4 ♘xf4

32 ♖xf4 ♘xc4

33 ♖xc4

Getting rid of the annoying knight is the safest way to victory. Black's king is sufficiently exposed to succumb to the combined attack of White's forces.

33 ... bxc4

34 ♖xc4 ♖b7

35 ♖f7

But this is not the way to do it: thinking that 'everything wins', White falters in his opponent's time trouble. The prophylactic 35 ♖b1! was called for, with an easily won game.

35 ... ♖e7?

Sax is an excellent time-trouble player, but here he failed to notice my mistake as he had no more than ten seconds left. After 35 ... ♖e5! 36 ♖f7+ ♖e7 (the move I completely overlooked; I thought 36 ... ♖b8 was forced when 37 ♖f4 is an easy win for White) 37 ♖e7+ ♖ba7 38 ♖f4 White is better but not clearly winning in the ensuing queen ending.

36 ♖f5!

White doesn't have to be asked twice. Switching the rook onto the fifth rank was rather impetuous on account of the ideas mentioned in the previous note.

36 ... ♖d6

37 ♖b2 a6?

38 ♖a5

And Black's flag fell in this position. 37 ... a6? was a dreadful time-pressure error but Black's game was already beyond repair at that point.

1-0

Game 4

Marjanovic - Campora

Nis 1985

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4

Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2 f6
7 h4 fxe5 8 h5 Qf7 9 dxe5
9 ... Qd7
10 f4 (43)



An important position for the whole variation. Black has a pawn preponderance in the centre, White on the kingside. This normally results in a lively struggle with chances for both sides.

10 ... Qd7

Timman gives the move 10 ... Qd7 an ! in his notes in *Informator* 43 and Seirawan agrees with him in his recent survey book on the Caro Advance. The alternatives are interesting, but probably inferior:

a) The extravagant 10 ... g5, weakening the kingside and also losing time, is thematic in terms of destroying White's central pawn chain (see van der Wiel-Timman after White's 11th move in the Main Game), but more than Black's position can handle at this moment when development is far from complete. It is mentioned here only because it led to a beautiful

game in Gazi-Makropoulos, Greek Ch Oligokastri 1985, where some typical dangers for Black became blatantly obvious, and also because it shows how alert White must be in order to take advantage of such mistakes in a typical sharp position arising from the main line of the Advance Variation: 11 h6g6 Qg6 12 Qd4 Qf7 13 Qd3 (preparing 0-0-0 and eyeing h7, even stronger was 13 Qf3 threatening Qg5, but then the following brilliancy would have never seen the light of day) 13 ... c5 14 Qf3 c4 15 Qe2 Qb6 16 Qd2 Qxb2 (practically forced because of White's plan 0-0-0 followed by f4-e5, while 16 ... d4 17 Qxd4 Qxc4 18 Qe3 loses right away) 17 Qxb2 Qxc2 18 Qd4 Qb6 19 Qxb7 Qc5 20 f5 exd5 (44)



21 e6! (opening more lines and threatening both 22 Qxd5 and 23 Qxc5) 21 ... Qe6 (the correct reply to 21 ... Qxb7 is not 22 exd7 Qxd7 when Black begins a counter-attack with the threat ... Qe6, but instead 22 Qxd5!

with a powerful attack, e.g. 22 ... 0-0-0 23 Qxc4+ Qe5 (amusingly is 23 ... Qb8 24 Qxc6+ Qd8 25 Qc7) 24 exd7 Qxc4 25 Qf4! threatening both Qh3 and Qh3+ forcing the capture of the rook, since 22 ... 0-0-0 is followed by 23 Qc7+ and mate in two more moves) 22 ... Qxb7 23 Qxc6! (as usual, it would be wrong to recover material in the midst of the attack: after 23 Qc7+ Qf7 24 Qxc6 the balance will eventually tip on the wrong side) 23 ... Qd7 (23 ... Qf7 24 Qxc5+ Qe7 25 Qc3+ is killing) 24 gxf5 Qg3+ (not 24 ... Qxd5 25 Qh3 Qb6+ 26 Qe2 Qxb1 27 Qxd8++ and mate soon follows) 25 Qe1 Qd6 26 Qd3 (adding more fuel to the fire) 26 ... Qb5 27 Qxc4 Qxd5 28 Qe3 (limiting the black king to the f-file) Qh1+ 29 Qe2 Qc8 30 Qf8+ Qd8 (Black has an unpleasant choice in severe time trouble: 30 ... Qd8 31 Qh4+ Qe7 32 Qxe7 or 30 ... Qd8 31 Qh3+ Qd5 32 Qe3 are not much better) 31 Qh3+ Qd6 32 Qe6+ Qd7 33 Qh8+ Qxc3 34 Qe8.

b) 10 ... Qc5 11 Qd4 Qb6 Black varied with 11 ... Qb6 in the game Leuw-Groszpetter, Katerin 1992. After 12 Qe3 Qb6 13 Qe4 Qb5 14 c3 Qe7 15 b4 Qe7 16 Qh3? Qd5 Groszpetter got a good position; instead of 16 Qh3?, 16 Qd3! was correct, when it is far from clear whether Black has achieved

anything positive with the periodical development of his knight on b6. The game ended 17 0-0 Qg8 18 f5 exd5 19 Qxd5 Qxd5 20 Qd5 Qe6 21 Qd4 Qd5 22 exd5 g4 23 Qe2 Qe6 24 Qe6 Qxc5 25 Qf1 Qc3+ 26 Qf2 Qf3+ 27 Qd2 Qg5 and 0-0 12 Qe4 Qe5 13 c3 Qxd4 14 Qxd4 c5 15 Qd1! Van der Wiel-Messa, Graz 1981. White is ready to answer 15 ... b5? with 16 Qxc5! Qxc5 17 b4; if Black avoids this, he simply prepares b2-b4, freeing the Qd4 from its entanglement.

c) 10 ... c5? 11 f5! Qxe5 12 Qf4 (12 Qxd7? 12 ... exd5 13 Qe2 Qd6 14 Qf4xd5 Qa5! The best move. After 14 ... Qb6 15 Qg5 White prepares castling long with a pleasant attacking position. But now Black's king will also find shelter on the queenside) 15 Qf4 0-0-0 16 0-0-0 Qxd5 17 Qxe5! (45) If 17 Qxd5? there follows 17 ... Qd3+ 18 exd3 Qd4+ 19 Qe2 Qf6+.



17 ... Qd3+ (A well-considered decision. If 17 ... Qh1? 18 Qxd6

Qg6 there follows 19 g2 with more than enough compensation for the exchange, e.g. 19 ... h6 20 Qh6+ Qd7 21 Qh5 h5g5 22 Qd5+; better is 19 ... Qh8 20 Qf2 Qg7 21 Qe5 with a strong initiative for White! 18 Qxd5 Qh8 19 Qh4! Kotrnica-Skermis, Athens God match game! 1987. After 19 ... f5g4 19 ... Qf6 20 Qh3!; 20 Qg2! 20 Qg2 Qg7 White should have continued with 21 c3 Qd1 h6? is also interesting! 21 ... Qh8 22 Qh1 obtaining a strong attack for the sacrificed material. It is well known that in such cases the presence of opposite-coloured bishops tends to favour the attacking side.

11 Qd4!?

White's treatment of the opening is more in accordance with the strategy of the position than 11 Qg2, played two years later in the game van der Wel-Timmer, Amsterdam 1967. That game ended 11 ... 0-0-0 12 b3 Qe7 13 Qa4 Qc7 14 Qc3 c5 15 c4 d4 (Black already has a slight advantage) 16 Qf2 (46)



16 ... g2 (now this thrust is well timed, compared with the game Geis-Makropoulos mentioned in the note after Black's tenth move) 17 h5g6 Qxg6 18 Qg3 Qxg5 19 0-0 Qe7 20 a3 Qd8 21 Qd1 d3! Q2 ... Qxb5 22 f5e5 Qxc4! 22 Qc3 Qd4 23 Qg4! Q3 Qd2 is unclear! 23 ... Qe4 24 Qe4 Qxe5 25 f5e5 Qd4! 26 Qd1 Qx2 27 Qe1 Qx1 28 Qb5 Qb5 29 Qxb7+ Qxb7 30 Qf3+ Qb6 31 Qe4+ Qe5 32 Qb7 Qg3+ and 0-1.

11 ... 0-0-0

Instead 11 ... Qc5 transposes to line 'b' in the note to Black's tenth move.

12 a3 c5

13 Qf3 Qe7

14 b4! cxb4

15 a3b4 Qc6

15 ... Qxb4 16 Qd2 Qx6 (16 ... Qc7 19 Qb6 Qb8 20 Qxb4 e or 18 ... Qb4 19 Qe2! 19 Qxb4!) 17 Qg5 Qe7 17 ... Qg8 18 Qb6 Qc5 19 Qh3 18 Qb6 Qb8 19 Qd6 Qg8 20 Qb4 Qc6 21 Qh5 is a nightmare for Black.

16 Qe4!

16 b5 is probably not as good. After 16 ... Qb1 17 Qd2 Qxc3 18 bxc3 bxc3 (Marjanovic) there is no clear-cut way for White to get an advantage. The text forces Black to capture the b-pawns with his queen, giving White the necessary tempo to build up a dangerous attack.

16 ... Qxb4+

17 Qd2 Qe4+?

More prudent was the passive 17 ... Qe7, but Campora probably disliked the position after 18 Qb5 Qxb8 19 Qb1 Qc7 20 Qe2? when Black is kept under pressure and White's initiative fully compensates for the pawn minus.

18 Qf2 (47)



With the sacrifice of a pawn White has managed to open lines against the enemy king, thus acquiring a strong initiative. To add to Black's troubles, his queen is threatened with capture in the middle of the board and his bishop on f7 is completely out of play. Campora's next move averts immediate disaster, but at the heavy cost of a piece.

18 ... Qdxc5

No relief was offered by the alternative 18 ... Qd4 19 Qh3 Qf3 20 Qd3 (t Marjanovic). Even worse is 18 ... Qc5?, when 19 Qb1 (threatening Qh-e1) Qd4 20 Qg5 forces immediate capitulation.

19 f5e5 Qxe5

20 Qd3!

A strong move, designed to do away with the only piece that could become a nuisance for White, namely Black's knight.

20 ... Qxd3+?

This is equivalent to resignation. Relatively best was 20 ... Qxg4 21 Qxa6 Qd4+ 22 Qc3 Qe5, although Black cannot really hope to survive in view of his exposed king.

21 exd3

Now White is completely winning since all the trumps are on his side: in addition to three open files on the queen-side, he also controls the important h2-b8 diagonal leading directly to the black monarch.

21 ... Qxg4

22 Qh2+ Qb8

23 Qh4 Qf5

24 Qe5 Qxc5

25 Qxb5

A problem-like mate could occur after 25 Qf4 Qb3 26 Qe6+ Qd8 27 Qc7+ Qb8 28 Qe7! Qe7 29 Qe4+ Qb6 30 Qc3+ d4 31 Qe4+ Qd4 32 Qe8+ Qb5 33 Qe4! (Marjanovic). However, the Yugoslav GM missed this elegant win in time trouble.

25 ... Qxb5

26 Qxb7! Qe7

27 Qxd8?

Time-pressure is responsible for the biggest blunders in tournament chess. This time White misses an easy mate

with 27 ♖f4+ ♗b8 28 ♘c8 ♘d8 29 ♗c6. Fortunately for him the position is still won.

27 ... ♘d8
28 ♖f4+ ♗b7
29 ♘e3 d4
30 ♘d4 ♘b6
31 ♗b2! ♗f7 (48)

There is no defence. On 31 ... ♗b8 32 ♘b6 axb6 33 ♗g7+ wins.



32 ♗g7+ 1-0

Black resigned since on 32 ... ♗a7 the sequel would be 33 ♗xb6 ♗a8 34 ♗a6 ♗b8 35 ♘e5+ with inevitable mate.

Conclusion

Games 3 and 4 show that the variation with 6 ... f6 offers both players a lot of interesting ideas. At present White's chances seem to be slightly better, but there is still room for investigation especially in the lines 'x' and 'y' after White's 10th. Black's problem is that the knight on d7 is not very well placed and this is perhaps a good argument for choosing 6 ... c5.

Main Line: 6 ... c5 7 h4,
Without 7 ... h6 (Games 5-7)

Game 5
Nagel - Woiters
Coru 1988

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♖f5 4
♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2
6 ... c5

The most thematic continuation, increasing Black's central influence while at the same time preparing to develop. The resulting positions are of a tactical nature and so a great deal of homework is required for those wishing to take up the 3 e5 variation. I hope that my coverage of this line will provide answers to all the key questions.

7 h4 (49)

The game Shabalov - Adnanovic, New York Open 1993 featured the move 7 ♘e3! which looks like a very playable deviation. Although Shabalov lost the game after several blunders I think that the opening was a success for him: 7 ... ♘g6 8 dxc5 ♘xc5 9 ♘f4 a6 10 ♗b2 ♘f6 11 0-0-0 ♘e7 12 ♘e2 ♘g4 13 ♘f3! exd5 14 ♘d5 ♘xc5 15 ♗g4 0-0 16 ♘d5!+. This bears a close resemblance to Game 9, with which it should be compared carefully.

At this moment Black has to make a difficult decision: the insecure position of the bishop on g6 puts an abrupt end to



any thoughts about 'normal' development and a weakening move has to be made. It is by no means clear what is the best way to solve this dilemma but one point is clear: White's threat of h4-h5 cannot be ignored without serious consequences. After 7 ... ♘g6? 8 h5 ♘e4 White has two ways to prove the superiority of his position:

a) 9 ♘e4!?! dxc4 10 c3 cxd4 11 ♘e4 ♘e5 11 ... ♘xc5 12 ♗b4+; 11 ... ♘d4 12 cxd4 ♘b4 13 ♘d2+ Boleslavsky) 12 ♘e3 ♘xc4 12 ... ♗b6? 13 ♗a4+!t Kergis-Kivlan, USSR 1979.

b) 9 ♗b3! and Black's last move looks like a shot in empty space.

However, after completing this book, I had to defend my variation in the Caro Advance against a surprising novelty. In the game Kotronias-Djuric, Corfu 1993, after 7 ... ♘g6 8 h5, the Yugoslav GM, noted for his uncompromising play introduced the move 8 ... ♘xc2?!. Although it's hard to believe

that such a move is objectively correct, I couldn't prove a clear advantage in the post-mortem. The game went 9 ♗xc2 cxd4 10 ♘b1 (on 10 ♘d1 White has to reckon with 10 ... ♗c8 11 ♘e2 ♗e7) 10 ... ♗c8 11 ♗b4 ♗b6 11 ... ♗d7 is interesting, but probably inferior) 12 ♘f4 and now Djuric missed the best continuation 12 ... ♗d8!. This move creates the dual threats of ... ♘d6 and ... ♘b4 and after the logical 13 ♘g3 Black may (only now!) trade queens with 13 ... ♗b4+ 14 ♗b4 ♘b4+ when in comparison to the game he gets c4 for his knights by capturing on a3. The resulting endgame seems unclear to me, so this line holds good prospects for investigation by both sides in the near future.

Djuric's actual choice, 12 ... ♗b4+! immediately restores material equality by gaining a third pawn for his piece, but this proves inadequate as White is not saddled with any weaknesses and he may put to good use his bishop pair. The continuation was 13 ♗b4 ♘b4+ 14 ♗d3 ♘xc5 15 ♘d2 ♘c3 16 ♘e3 ♘f6 17 f3 h6?! (better 17 ... 0-0 18 ♘f4 (threatening ♘e6) 18 ... ♘d7 19 ♘d2 ♗e7 20 ♘f3 e5 21 a3 ♘d6 22 ♗e1 interesting is 22 ♘d3 intending ♘d4) 22 ... ♗d3 23 ♘e3 ♗b6 24 ♘e6 ♘e7 25 ♗d2 ♗b6 26 ♗xc3 ♘f6? 26 ... ♘b6? 27 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 28 ♘b3+! 26 ... ♗e7? 27 ♘f5+! 26 ... ♗e7?

27 Qf5 Ee7?? (a terrible blunder, but his position was already lost) 28 Qxb7 1-0.

The alternatives that will be examined in the remaining games are 7... f6, 7... cxd4, 7... h5 and 7... h6.

7 ... cxd4

The old main line, which became the subject of a long theoretical debate in the '80s after Seirawan won brilliantly with it against Hort at Bad Kissingen 1981. Its main advantage is that it weakens for ever the support of White's strong e5-pawn and thus discourages f4-f5, but on the other hand it helps the white knight approach the centre with gain of time and therefore considerably improves White's chances in the complications which follow.

Another option trying to improve on the 6... f6 variation is 7... f6, planning to develop the queen's knight on c6 in order to exert more effective pressure on the centre. However, it has the corresponding disadvantage of loosening his own central structure and a likely continuation is 8 Qg2? (now the bishop's development on g2 is more to the point - compare with Westersien-Groszpetter in the notes to Game 3; Seirawan mentions only 8 Qf4 and Nunn's 8 h5 8... Qc6 9 f4 (preparing f4-f5; White's minor pieces are ideally placed to exercise pressure on

d5 in case he successfully carries out the above-mentioned breakthrough) 9... Qg7 (possible is 9... fxe5, trying to stabilize the position in the centre, but after 10 dxe5 Qg7 11 Qh3? White keeps the initiative; the text, on the other hand, allows an interesting pawn sacrifice resulting in a lively game) 10 f5? exf5 11 exf6 g6 12 g5 (Sf8).



White has excellent dark-square compensation for the pawn, having vacated f4 for his knight and also preparing to bring his queen's bishop efficiently into the game. Although this is hardly the final word on 7... f6, I think that it is quite characteristic of what White should be aiming for in such positions.

8 Qxd4 h5

9 f4!

This is a big improvement over Hort's 9 Qb5+?! in the aforementioned game. The continuation was 9... Qd7 10 Qd5 Qe7 11 f4 hxg4 12 Qxg4 Qxg4 13 fxg5 Qh5 14 Qh3 Qe7

15 Qe2 Ee8 16 Qe1 Qf6 17 Qb3 e6 18 Qxd7+ Qxd7 19 Qc1 Ee4 20 Qd2 Ee4 21 a3? Edb2! 22 Qd4 Ee2+ 23 Qe2 Ee5+ 24 Qc3 d4 25 Qb1 Qe6 26 Ee3 Qd5 27 Qd4 Qe4 28 Qe2 dxc3 29 Qc1 e5 30 Ee1 Qf5 31 a4 e2 32 Qe3 Qe4 33 Ee3? Qe6 34 Ee5 and White at the same time resigned.

9 ... hxg4

Wrong is 9... Qe7? 10 Qxb7? 9... Qd7?? was tried in the 1986 correspondence game Korolev-Kastarnov; after 10 f5 exf5 the continuation was 11 gxf5 Qd5 12 Qxf5 Qd5 13 Qxd5 Qe6 14 Qh3 Qe4+ 15 Qe5+ Qe5 16 Qf6 Qe6 17 Ee1 Qe8 18 Qd5 (Bourmeester suggests 18 Qe7!, but this is not entirely clear in my opinion) 19... Qe7 19 0-0 Qf6 20 Qe8 a5 21 Qe3 0-0 22 Qxb7 Qe7 23 Qxa7 Qxa7+ 24 Qh1 Ee8 25 Qd6 Ebd2 26 Qf4 Qxf4 27 Ee4 Ee2 28 Ee5 f6 29 Ee5 and the game was agreed drawn. Instead, I believe, much stronger was 11 Qe2!, after which White enjoys a powerful initiative.

10 Qb5+

In many positions arising after 6... c5, it is important to give this check when Black is unable to interpose with... Qb8-c6.

10 ... Qd7

11 f5

The most energetic continuation. Another possibility is 11

Qxg4 Qh6 12 Qg2 Qf6? 13 Qe3 0-0-0 14 h5 Qe7 15 Ee3 Qe5 16 0-0-0 with a slight advantage for White in Nagel-Gebhardt, corr 1989.

11 ... Ee4 (Sf8)

Also unsuccessful was Black's choice in See-Valasz, Hungary 1984, which continued 11... Qxf5 12 Qxf5 exf5 13 Qxd5 Qe7? (13... a6 14 Qe5 Qe7 15 Qxb7 axb5 16 Qxb5!; 14... Qe7? 15 Qe4+) 14 Qf4 Qe7 14... 0-0-0 15 Qxf7 and now 15 Qe2 0-0-0 16 e6 Qe6 17 Qd7+ Qe8 18 Qb5 Qf3+ 19 Qd1 (Sax) would have won easily.



12 Ee1

After 12 0-0?, 12... Ee4! follows, with wild complications. The text is a big improvement over 12 Ee1, which was shown to be definitely inferior in the encounter van der Wiel-Speelman, Wijk aan Zee 1983. 12... Qh5 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 Qxe6 Qe6 15 Qxd7+ Qxd7 16 Qxd5+ Qe6 17 Qd4 Ee8 18 e6+ Qe8 19 Qe5 Qe6 20 Qe4+ Qe5 21 Qe5+ Qe5 22 Qe4 Qxd4 23 Ee3 Qe6+ 24 Ee1 Qe4 25 Qe4+

and 4-4.

Another option is 12 Qd7+?, attempting to force transposition to the game Moore-Mills analysed in the next note. This was White's choice in the game Krpelan-Durak, Vienna 1981, which ended 12 ... Qxd7 B Bf1 Bf2 13 ... Bf5? 14 f3g4 exf5? (much better is 14 ... Bf5) 15 fxe6 fxe6 and now 16 Qxe6 Qxe6 17 Bxd8 (hoping for 17 ... Qxf8 18 Qxe5- Qe7 19 Qe5+ 17 ... Bf1+ does not work for White, but 16 Qd3 offers an initiative for the sacrificed pawn; therefore this interesting continuation requires more practical tests) 15 Qxf5 Qd5 16 Qxd5+ Qe6 17 Qe5 Qe7 18 Qxe7 Qxe7 (for 18 ... Qxe7, see Moore-Mills immediately below) 19 0-0-0 Qxb6 20 Qc3 Qc5 21 Qxd5 e5 22 Qe4 Qe5 23 Qf3 Qe6 and 1-0.

12 ... exf5?!.

This is a critical moment for the whole variation. The alternative 12 ... Bb2? led to a forced loss in the game Moore-Mills, USA 1984, after 13 Qxd7+ inferior is 13 f3g4?, although after 13 ... Qxd5? 14 Qxd5 exf5 (S2)

the typical breakthrough 15 e6! led to a win for White in Nunn-Wells, Clchester 1984; instead, 13 ... exf5 14 Qxd5 Qd5 15 Qxf5 Qb4+ is only 1, according to Nunn) 13 ... Qxd7 14 f3g4 exf5 15 Qxd5 Qd5 (also losing is 15 ... Qd5 16 Qd3 Qxc2 17 Qf3)



analysis by Moore) 16 Qxf5+ Qe6 17 Qe5 Qe7 18 Qxe7 Qxe7 19 Qf3 (another winning line provided by Moore is 19 Qd7 Qxc2 20 Qe6+ Qe5 21 Qd9 19 ... Qf8 19 ... Qxc2? 20 Qd4+ 20 Qe6+ 21 0-0-0 Qb6+ 22 Qd4 Qe6 22 ... Qe6 23 Qxb6+ Qe8 24 Qd4+- Moore) 23 Qf4 Qe6 24 e6+ Qe6 25 exf7 Qe6 26 Qe6+ Qe6 27 Qe3+ Qe6 28 Qxd5+ Qe6 29 Qd3+ Qe5 30 Qb4+ Qe5 31 Bf3 Qd4 32 Qb3+ Qe5 33 Qd2+ Qe4 34 Qd3+ Qe5 35 Qe5+ and 1-0.

Also bad is 12 ... Qxf5 13 Qxf5 Qd5 14 Qxe7+ Qxe7 15 f3g4 Qxe5+ 16 Qd1 Qf8 17 Bg1h (Nunn).

A dynamic way to continue fighting is Seirawan's suggestion of 12 ... Bb2? which involves the sacrifice of a whole piece in order to wrest the initiative. The resulting positions are rich in tactical possibilities but for the time being there are no practical examples with this move. After 13 f3g6 Black has two options:

a) 13 ... Qxe5+ 14 Qxc2 Qb4+

15 Qd2 Qd5+ 16 Qxf6; this looks better for White, as the white king will find shelter on the queenside after c2-c3, Qd2-c2.

b) 13 ... Bb4+ (Seirawan's intention) 14 Qe2 Qxe5+ 14 ... Qd2+ 15 Qd3? Qd3+ 16 Qd3 Qxe5 17 Qxd7+ Qxd7 18 Qd7+ is better for White! 15 Qd3 is unclear. Black should avoid the tempting 15 ... f5? which is met strongly by 16 Qxe6! 15 ... 0-0-0 seems reasonable, but after 16 Qxd7+ Qxd7 17 Bf1 Black has yet to prove that he has sufficient compensation.

13 e6!

An older suggestion was 13 Qf4, tested in Westerman-Adianto, Thessaloniki OL 1988. That game continued 13 ... e6 14 e6 14 Qa4 b5 15 Qe3 Qe3 16 Qxd5 Qb4+ 17 Qe2 0-0-0 is unclear according to Adianto! 14 ... e6b5 15 Qe2 Qe7 16 exd7+? Qxd7 17 Qxb6 Qf8 18 0-0-0 Qf6 19 Qe2 (S3)



19 ... Qe5 20 Qe5 Qd5 21 Qxf5 Qxf4 22 Qxf4 Qe6 23 Qe4 Qe5 24 Qe4 Qe5+ 25 Qe1 Qe8 26 Qe1 e3 27 Qe5 Qe6 28 Qe2

Qe8 29 Qe3 f4 30 Qe6 Qd5 31 Qe4 Qd1 32 Qe5 Qe8 33 Qe4 Qe6 34 Qf6+ Qe8 35 Qxe8 Qxe5 36 Qxd1 e2 37 Qe2 Qd1 38 Qf1 Qe5 and 0-1. Stronger seems Karasik's 16 Qxd5 Qe5 17 Qe7+ Qf8 18 0-0-0 Qe8 19 exf7 Qxf7 20 Qxe8 Qxe8 21 Qxf5 Qe6 22 Qg3 Qd3 23 Qxe7 Qe7 24 Qe6+ Qe8 25 Qf5+-, but this has not yet been adopted in practice.

13 ... fxe6
14 Qxe6 Qe7
15 Qe2 Qh2!
16 Qe7+ (S4)

Inferior is 16 Qe5, played in the earlier game Kotliar-Beizer, Israel 1986, which concluded 16 ... Qxf6 17 Qf4 Qxc2 18 Qe7+ Qf7 19 Qxe7+ Qxe7 20 Qxe8 Qxc2 21 Qxe7 Qb4 22 Qd2 Qxd7 23 0-0-0 Qd3 24 Qd1 Qd5 25 Qd3 Qd6+ 26 Qxe3 Qe6 27 Qd5 Qd3 28 Qe5 Qe2 29 Qe7+ Qe6 30 Qe7 Qd1+ 31 Qd1 Qd6+ 32 Qd1 f4+ 33 Qe1 f3 34 Qe2 Qe4 35 Qe7 e3 36 Qe3 Qe6 37 Qf3 Qd3 38 Qd3 e5 39 Qe5 and 1-0.



16 ... Qd8?!

A better defensive try is 16 ... Qf7, as Black's king is a lot safer and may assist his army of pawns. I suspect this is also not enough in the long run, but it obviously demands a lot more precision on White's part to prove it.

17 Qxe7+ Qxe7
18 Qf4 Qxc2
19 Qxa8 Qh4+

The continuation 19 ... Qe5 20 Qxd5 a6? 21 Qc7+ Qc8 22 Qany/b6+ demonstrates the dangers faced by Black's king even after the exchange of queens. Also useless is 19 ... Qg6 20 Nf2 etc.

20 Qd1 Nxb2
21 Qc7 Qf7
22 Qe1 Nf2

Black is forced to exchange his only rook, since 22 ... Qb4 23 Qd6 loses immediately.

23 Nxf2 Qxf2
24 Q7xd5 g3
25 Qc2

Black has kept four pawns for the rook, but his pieces are uncoordinated and the end is near. Still, White must not relax as the passed pawns may become dangerous at a moment's notice.

25 ... Qe5

25 ... g2 is premature. 26 Qh2 g5 27 Qg1 and White is winning easily after both 27 ... Qb4 28 Qx3 and 27 ... Qg3 28 Qd1.

26 Qd1 Qc8
27 Qe2 Qh5

Thematic is 27 ... Qe4 28

Qb6+ axb6 29 Qd7+ Q38 30 Qxf5+ etc.

28 Qx3 Qf3

Also losing are 28 ... a6 29 Qe5 Qxc3 30 Qxc3 Qe4 31 Qb6, 28 ... Qf6 29 Qxd5 and 28 ... Qe7 29 Qh1.

29 Nf1 Qxc2
30 Qxc2 Qe6 (S)



31 Qxg3! 1-0

The final stroke. Black resigned, since both 31 ... Qxg3 32 Qxd5 Qe5 33 Qc4 and 31 ... Qxc3 32 Qc4 Qd7 33 Qxc6+ Qxb6 34 Qd1 are quite hopeless.

Conclusion

The variation with 7 ... cxd4 is perhaps the most complex sub-variation of the Caro Advance. At present White's chances seem better, but Seirawan's suggestion of 12 ... Qh7 might cause a renewal of interest in this discarded line.

Game 6

Van der Wiel - Icklicki
Brussels 1985

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5 4

Qc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qg2 c5
7 h4

7 ... h5? (S)



This idea has been considered inadequate because of the game under examination, but my analysis indicates that if White relies on the game result without further analysis he may be confronted with a nasty experience. For example, in his recent book on the Caro Advance Seirawan adopts established theory, reaching rather different conclusions from those which I suggest in the following analysis.

8 Qf4 Qh7!

Strategically sounder than Seirawan's 8 ... Qe6?7 which results in a deterioration of Black's pawn structure on the kingside and is examined extensively in Game 7.

9 Qxh5

The Danish IM Klaus Berg has suggested here 9 g5?; however this has never been tried in tournament practice.

9 ... cxd4

10 Qxd4 Qc6

11 Qb5 Qe7! (S)
An improvement on Boleslavsky's recommendation of 11 ... Qxc2?, when 12 Qd5 Qd7 13 Qh2 Qh7 14 Bc1! would follow. Black is in no hurry to restore material equality but opts instead for a flexible development of his pieces.



12 Qh6!

The only way to maintain the initiative. White develops with a gain of tempo, perceiving that the bishop on h6 will be immune from capture for several moves. White would have had big headaches after 12 Qg5? a6 B Qxc6+ Qxc6 in view of Black's razor-like bishops.

12 ... Qd7

According to my research, Black has a stronger move at this juncture:

12 ... a6!

This is a big improvement, since B Qxc6+ Qxc6 14 Qf6 Qg6 is only a slightly worse version of Black's position in the previous note. White has to be accurate now, therefore I present my analysis in some

detail:

13 Qxc6+ Qxc6 14 Bf4 Bg7
A novelty by the author. Inadequate is 14... gch6? (van der Wiel disposes of the alternative 14... Bb6 by 15 Qxg7 Bxb2 16 0-0!) 15 Qf6+ Qe7 16 Qxd5+! exd5 17 0-0-0 (worse is van der Wiel's 17 Bf6+ as after 17... Qe8 18 Bxb8 (+- van der Wiel) 18... Qxc2 the position is rather unclear) and Black has an unpleasant choice between:

17... Qg7 18 Qxd5 Qf8 19 e6!;

20 17... Qe6 18 Qxd5+;
30 17... d4 18 Bf6+ Qe8 19 Bxb8 Qg6 (19... Qxc2 20 Qxc2 Qd5 20... Qe7 21 e6) 21 Qe4 Qb4+ 22 Qd2+ or 19... Qa5 20 Bxb7 dxc3 21 e6+ 20 e6! fxe6 20... Qa5 21 e7! 21 Bxe1 Qf7 21... Bxb4 22 Bxc6+ Qf7 23 Bxg6! or 21... Qf7 22 h5 Qg5+ 23 f4! are both depressing for Black! 22 Qe4 Qa5 23 Qd6+ Qe7 24 Qf5+ Qe8 25 a3 with a strong initiative for White.

15 0-0-0 Qh5? 16 Bb3?

As in many lines so far, the rook transfer to the third rank combines defensive and attacking purposes. Here it is the only move, resulting in a highly complex position awaiting its first practical test. If 16... d5 17 Bxd4! Qxd4 18 Bxb4!; or 16... Qb4 17 Bb4! Bc8 (17... Qxa2 18 Qxa2 Bxc2 19 Bb4+; 17... Qxc2 18 Bb4 Qc7 18... Qa5 19 Bf3 Qg6 20 Qxc7 Qxc7 21 Qxc7+)

Bxg7 22 h5 Qh7 23 h6! 19 Qxc7 Qxc7 20 Qb5 with a strong initiative. 17... Qe6 18 Bf2! 18 Bxb4! Bxb4 18... Qxb4 19 Qxc7! 19 Bxb4 Qxb4 20 Qxc7 and the white h-pawn will be valuable in the ending considering that Black cannot effectively use his pressure on the c-file, e.g. 20... d4 20... f3? might be the only chance to complicate the issue! 21 Qf6+ Qe8 22 Qxc6 dxc3 23 Qf6 cxb2+ 24 Qxb2, or 20... Qe7 21 Qf6+ Qe8 22 Qg5 and if 22... d4 23 Qf6. However:

16... Bc8 17 Bf3 Qg6

leaves the position unclear and further tests are needed before a comprehensive evaluation is passed.

Nevertheless, Icklick's move (if followed up correctly) also contains some drops of poison.

13 Bf4 (58)



13... 0-0-0?

A decisive mistake. There was still time to mix things up by 13... Qg6! 14 Qxc6! 0-0-0 with a difficult game for both sides. Inferior in this line would

be 14 Bg7?, as after 14... 0-0-0 15 Qxc7! (15 Qxc7! Qxc7 16 Qxd8 Bxb8 is better for Black) 15... Qxc7 16 Qxc7 Qxc6 Black gets excellent counterplay in the centre in return for the sacrificed pawn.

14 Qxc7? Qxc7
15 Qxc7 Qxc6
16 Qxc6!

Now it is clear why Black should have played... Qe7-g6 earlier. Since there is no piece hanging on h6, White hastens to exchange one of the dangerous knights and occupy d4 with his queen.

16... Bxc6?

More practical chances were offered by 16... Qxf4 17 Qxd7+ Bxd7! (on 17... Qxd7 there follows 18 Qe2! Qe4 19 f3 Qxf3 20 Bf1!) as White has to play very accurately to capitalize on his advantage:
a) 18 Qe2! Qe4 19 Qxd4! Qxd4 20 h5 Bc7! and White is in difficulties.

b) 18 Qh5! Qxd5 19 gch5 Bc7? 19... Qe4! is tougher, when White still has some technical difficulties to overcome:

b) 20 0-0-0?! Bc4 with strong counterplay for Black;
b) 20 Bc1: 20... Bc4 21 Qb3 Bc4+ 22 Qc2 Bxc2? 23 Qd6+ Qd7 24 Qxf7+; 20... a6 21 Qe2! Qe4 22 Bc2 Bxb5 23 Qxc7! since 23... Bxc7 fails to 24 f4!, trapping the rook in broad daylight.

17 Bb4 Qxe5
Black is two pawns down without any compensation. With his last move he hopes for a tactical *mélie*, but White finds a neat way to finish him off.



19 Bb3!
The game is over. In addition to his extra piece, White soon gets a mating attack.

19... Qg2
20 0-0-0 Bxf2
21 Qc5+ Bb8
22 Qb5 Bd5
23 Qxa7+ Qc8
24 Qa8+ 1-0

Game 7
Timman - Seirawan
Hilversum (4th Match
Game) 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Qf5
4 Qxc3 e6 5 g4 Qg6 6 Qge2
c5 7 h4 h5?
8 Qf4
8... Qc6? 160!
In matches of this calibre
novelties like 8... Qc6 are a bit



unusual; Black not only surrenders a powerful bishop, but also allows the crippling of his pawn structure for the sake of quick development and central pressure. Yet, although such moves are hardly aesthetically pleasing, this one is by no means easy to refute.

9 6xg6

White must take his chance while it is there, destroying the defensive pawn skeleton around Black's king. The game Tzourm-baw-Kourkousakis, Athens 1992, saw the routine development 9 6b5 which resulted in a catastrophe for White: 9... 6e7 is move that would normally be met by 6b6; it now secures complete control of f5 without any structural concessions while at the same time the destruction of White's pawn centre is assured! 10 6e3 hxg4 11 dxc3 6f5 and Black already had a strategically winning position due to the pressure on the weak white pawns and the tactical possibility... g7-g5.

9 ... fxg6

10 6d3?

A grave error which is already an indication that White has been taken by surprise. A logical explanation could be that Timman wanted to punish his opponent for the 'ugly' 8... 6b6 as quickly as possible, but now the position is already lost!

White's best is Seirawan's suggestion to redeploy the remaining knight by 10 6e2!, threatening both to increase the pressure on the weakened black kingside pawns and to stabilize White's central pawn chain with e2-c3. Black has nothing better than 10... cxd4 (10... hxg4?! 11 6f4 6xd4 12 6e4 6d4? 13 6b5+/- or 12... g5 13 6e6 (according to analysis by Greek masters, 13 6e6 fails because of 13... 6d8 - but not 13... 6d7 because then follows 14 6d4 c6! 15 6b5 with much the better ending for White) 13... 6b6 14 6b5 6d6 15 6d2 6e4 16 6d3 6d4 17, reaching a position which the American Grandmaster considers satisfactory for Black. I disagree with this evaluation since after 13 6d3 6e6 14 6d4! (worse would be 14 6d6+? 6d7 15 6d4 hxg4! which merely drives the black king to a safer spot, while also interesting in this line is 15... 6b6? 16 g6d5 6e5 17 6d1 6f8 as in Forster-Lyberg, Gaus-pawa 1991, which concluded 18

14 6e7 19 6e2 6e7 20 c3 6e6 21 fxe5 6d1 22 6d1 6f1- 23 6e2 6f2- 24 6d1 6e2 25 6d2 6f1- 26 6e2 6d1 27 6e8 6e5 28 6f7- 6b6 29 6b6- 6e7 30 6e7+ 6b6 31 6e6+ and 4-4) 14... hxg6 15 6d2! (White must avoid the queen exchange at all costs as after 15 6d3? 6e5! Black would have everything going his way) 15... 6d4 16 0-0-0 6d1 16... 6d7? - Kourkousakis! 17 6d1 6b6 18 6xg4!, Black dare not play 18... 6e5? in view of 19 6b5+! Therefore 18... 6d7 is forced, leaving White with much the better game after 19 f4.

Editor's note: the latest word on 10 6e2 comes from the game Timman-Karpov, Djakarta Wch (17) 1993. There Karpov replied 10... 6e7 7f7 which led to great complications: 11 6f4 cxd4 12 6h3 (12 6e6 6d7 13 6d8 6d8 eases Black's task) 12... 6e5 13 6e2 (13 6e6 is met by 13... 6d5- 14 6d2 6b6, and 13 g6d5 by 13... 6f5 13... 6e6 13... hxg4 14 6e5 g6h3 15 6e6 6e6 16 6e2 14 6e6 6e5+ 15 6f1 hxg4 16 6e4 6e6 17 6e2 6b6 18 6d1 6e4 19 6e4 6e5 20 6d4 6e4 21 6d4 dxc4 22 6e3 (Adriano pointed out that 22 6f4 6d7 23 6e5 land not 23 6e7 6f7) 23... 6e8 24 6d1 6e5 25 6d1 6f8 26 6d4! followed by 6d4 is probably winning for White) 22... 6d7 23 6e5 6e7 23... 6e6 24 6d1+ 6e6. Here

the commentators, including Seirawan who was acting as Timman's second, felt that 25 6d4 should give White good chances, e.g. 25... b5 26 6d1 6d8 27 6e6 or 25... 6f6 26 6e6. Instead a draw was agreed in the game following the moves 25 6e6 6f6 26 6d4+ 6b6 27 6f3+ 6e6 28 6d4+ 6b6 29 6d1 6e6 30 6e6+ 6e6 31 6d4+ 6b6 32 6e5 6e7 33 6d3 6e6 4-4.

10 ... cxd4!

11 6b5

Red is 11 6b6+? as the queen gets trapped after 11... 6d7 12 6b5 6e5. Note that Black would react in a similar way to 10 6d3.

11 ... hxg4!

A typical reaction, both in order to open the h-file and challenge control of the important outpost f5.

12 6xg6+ 6d7

13 6xg4 6b6!

White has re-established material equality, but his position looks completely disorganized due to lack of central control. With his next move Timman tries to restore the coordination of his pieces by bringing the knight back into play, even at the cost of a pawn.

14 c3! dxc3

15 6e3 6b6! 6d!

Also good is 15... 6d4! (Timman). The text move, although objectively correct,

allows White to stir up some colourful complications.



16 ♖xb6 ♗xb2
17 ♘d2!

Sacrificing the exchange to prevent Black from consolidating his advantage. In this way, White keeps some swindling chances alive.

17 ... ♗xa1+
18 ♖e2 ♗b2?

Not only missing a picturesque win but also letting White back into the game. Seirawan himself points out the following winning line in *Inside Chess* 18 ... d4! 19 ♘g2 d3+! 20 ♗e3 ♗c5+ 21 ♗e4 ♗b2 22 ♗g7- ♘e7! 23 ♗d4 (23 ♗d3 ♗a3+!) 23 ... ♗b2 24 ♗xb7+ ♗e6 25 ♗e7 (unfortunately for White he cannot discover an attack on the black king since all king moves - except 25 ♗f3 - are illegal) 25 ... ♗h4+ 26 ♗f3 ♗xf2.

19 ♘b3

Of course, White cannot play 19 ♘c5 ♗b6+.

19 ... ♗e8
20 ♗b1 ♗c2

21 ♗xb7+ ♗c8
22 ♗b1?

White returns the compliment. After 22 ♗b5 g2 23 h5 ♗h7 24 ♗d5 ♗c7 the position is still unclear, according to Seirawan.

22 ... ♘a3!+

The game is decided. White probably overlooked that on 23 ♗g7 Black answers 23 ... ♗h7, repulsing all threats before continuing with his own attack.

23 ♗d1 ♘h2
24 ♘b5 ♗b8
25 ♘d6 ♘d4+
26 ♗e3 ♘c2



26 ... ♗xb4!
27 ♗xb4 ♗xd1
28 ♘g4 ♘c2+
29 ♗d3 ♘f1+
0-1

White loses his queen after 30 ♗e3 ♘g2+ 31 ♗d3 ♗b1.

This game, in conjunction with its partner from the same match (Game 10), demonstrates how difficult it is to handle an innovation in this variation even at the highest level.

Main Line:

6 ... c5 7 h4 h6 (Games 8-10)

Game 8

*Kotronias - Campora
Moscow 1987*

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2 c5 7 h4

7 ... h6 ♘3



A modest choice, which has become more and more popular recently. We have already witnessed that the alternative choices are also interesting, yet the general impression remains that it is difficult to neutralize White's initiative within the limits of the existing theoretical knowledge. Therefore, to give preference to 7 ... h6? is not a matter of taste, but rather a well-grounded decision to opt for a sound middlegame.

8 h5?

White should refrain from an early h4-h5, as it deprives him of a later tempo-gain on Black's bishop when the F-pawn is advanced. The shortcomings

of 8 h5? will become apparent in the following notes as well as in Nunn-Seirawan, Lugano 1983, featured in Game 10, Timman-Seirawan.

Another option is 8 ♘f4 ♘h7 9 ♘e3 ♘c6 (Black obtained an equal game after 9 ... ♘e7 10 dxc5 ♘c6 11 ♗b5 ♘d7 12 ♗e2 ♗e7 13.0-0 ♗xc5 14 ♗d1 ♘xc5 15 ♘f5 in Korchnoi-Blyuzne, USSR 1950 10 ♗h3 ♗b6 11 ♘a4 ♗b5+ with great complications, Papadimitroou - Kourkourakis, Athens 1992, but best is 8 ♘e3!, as will be seen in the three remaining games of this chapter.

8 ... ♘h7
9 ♘e3 ♗b6

Also good is 9 ... ♘c6, which is likely to transpose after 10 ♗d2 and retains independent significance only after the try 10 dxc5, which proved unsuccessful in Yudasin-Seirawan, Jacksonville 1990: 10 ... ♘xc5 11 ♘d4 ♘f6 12 ♗b5+ ♘f7 13 f4 a6! (Black has satisfactory development, therefore any tactical skirmishes taking place on his side of the board are likely to end in his favour) 14 fxc5 (14 ♘e4 ♘c4 14 ... a5b5 ♘xb5 ♘xc5 15 ♗d4 ♘e4 17 ♗b6 ♗b6 18 ♘b6 ♗d7 19 0-0 16 20 ♘e4 ♘e7 21 ♗e1 ♗f8 22 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 23 a3 ♘c2 24 ♗c1 ♗c8 25 e5f6 g6 26 ♗f2 ♘d3 27 ♘c3 ♗e4 and 0-1.

10 ♗d2 c4

After 10 ... ♗b2? 11 ♗d3

12... 12 ♖xc2 Qxc2 13 ♖b7 c4
14 ♕b5 ♕a6 15 Qg2 White has
more than enough compensation
for the pawn, according to
analysis by Karpov and Zaitsev.

11 0-0-0 ♕c6
12 f4 0-0-0

12 ... ♖a5 transposes to
Nunn-Seirawan (see the note to
White's 9th move in Game 10).

13 Qh3?

White's plan is to destroy
Black's defensive formation by
advancing the g-pawn all the
way up to g6.

13 ... ♖b8?

This loss of tempo allows
White's inaccuracy on the 8th
move to go un punished. Correct
is either 13 ... ♖b6! or 13
... ♕e7! with a slight advantage
for Black.

14 f5 Qb4?

The decisive mistake from a
strategic point of view. When I
saw this move on the board I
was very relieved, since it self-
blocks Black's attack (for the
correct approach see Game 10,
Timman - Seirawan). Much
better was 14 ... ♖b6, still with
an unclear position.

15 a3 Qa5
16 ♕f4 ♖e8
17 ♖hf1

Now White's advantage is
evident: more space, better
development and the lack of an
active plan for his opponent
guarantee a long-term superior-
ity. The only problem is how
to increase the pressure in the

most effective way, but since
White can afford to take his
time he will first attempt to
exchange the black-squared
bishops and thus create more
weaknesses in the black camp.

17 ... ♕d8

The fact that Black is forced
to play such moves just to
complete his development
speaks volumes about his
predicament.

18 ♖e1 ♕e7
19 Qd2 ♖c6
20 ♕e2 Qxd2+
21 ♖xd2

The first exchange of wood
does nothing to relieve Black
from his congestion. Mean-
while, the white pawn on f5
may never be taken because of
the weakness of its counterpart
on d5.

21 ... ♕c8
22 ♖b4!

White's intention is to ex-
change queens, a highly favour-
able event because it will allow
him to open another front on
the queenside. Black's lack of
space will then make it difficult
for him to block all entrances
to his side of the board.

22 ... b6
23 ♕c3

Now the idea is to bring
additional pressure on the
d5-pawn by Qh3-g2.

23 ... a5?

Better was 23 ... a5 imme-
diately, but it could not have
saved Black's head in the long

run.

24 Qg2 a5

Now the only move to keep
his head above the water, be-
cause of the threat 25 ♕fxd5
exd5 26 Qxd5 and in addition to
the three pawns for the piece
White will obtain a strong
attack.

25 ♖b5 ♕e7
26 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 (64)



Now White may proceed
slowly with preparation of the
breakthrough b3 and attempt
to infiltrate through the c- and
f-files, as well as the knight
jump to d6 via b5. However, the
plan chosen in the game is far
more typical of such positions,
emphasizing the long-term
space superiority provided by
the central white pawns in the
Caro Advance.

27 ♕fxd5! exd5
28 Qxd5 ♖hf8
29 Qxc4

White has not sacrificed
anything from the material
point of view, while the h7-
bishop is destined to remain a
spectator (or worse) in the

coming stages of the battle. In
addition, the black knights have
no supported strongpoints
from which to exercise their
power while the black rooks
lack open files. Meanwhile,
White's central pawn roller will
advance without facing serious
resistance.

29 ... ♕a7
30 ♖fe1 ♕d6
31 ♕b5!

Exchanges will emphasize
White's advantage and free the
way for the pawns. Black is so
cramped that he does not have
any real choice.

31 ... ♕xb5
32 Qxb5 ♖b7
33 ♖e3! ♖d8

34 d5 ♕a7
35 Qe2 ♖fe8
36 d6 Qg8
37 b4!

Now focusing on the weak
position of the black king,
White opens more lines.

37 ... axb4
38 axb4 b5
39 ♖b2 ♖b6
40 Qf3 ♖d7
41 ♖a1

Setting a trap into which
Black walks unsuspectingly.
However, his position was
already hopeless in view of the
threat 42 ♖c3.

41 ... ♕c6? (65)
42 ♖a6! ♖a6
43 Qxc6 ♖ed8

Also useless was 43 ... ♖d8
44 Qxc8 ♖a8 45 d7 ♖d8 46 e6



etc.

44 ♁a3+ 1-0

The move order is important, since the black king may not go to b7 and after 44 ... ♖b6 45 ♗d7 ♗d7 46 ♗a8 ♗h7 47 ♗b8 the poor bishop is trapped inside the cage created by the white pawns.

Game 9

Timman - Karpov
Belfort 1988

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4
♗c3 e6 5 g4 ♗g6 6 ♗g2 c5
7 h4 h6

8 ♗e3! (66)



There are two main alternatives for Black: 8 ... ♗b6! (Game

10) and 8 ... cxd4 (Game 11). As we shall see, the most accurate move is 8 ... ♗b6!, overprotecting Black's c-pawn and preparing queenside castling. Karpov's choice 8 ... ♗g6 looks like a solid developing move, but Timman's treatment of the opening reveals its dark side.

8 ... ♗g6?
9 dxc5!

This move was first introduced in this game. White gives up the centre for tactical reasons, estimating that his lead in development will be of considerable help in the complications that will follow. In the rapid chess game Palamidis-Kourkounakis, Athens 1991, White committed the typical mistake of advancing immediately 9 h5 and the loss of time showed after 9 ... ♗h7 10 f4 ♗e5 11 ♗d2 ♗e8 12 f5 exf5 13 ♗xd5 ♗bd2+ 14 ♗xd2 fxe4 15 ♗g2 ♗g7 16 ♗h1 ♗f5 17 e3 ♗h4 18 ♗h3 ♗f3+ 19 ♗d3 gxf3 20 ♗g3 cxd4 21 ♗xd4 ♗d8 22 ♗f7+ ♗d7 23 ♗h5 a6 24 ♗h6 ♗d6 25 cxd6 ♗xd4 26 cxd4 ♗e8 27 ♗d3 ♗e2+ and Black won easily.

9 ... ♗g6
10 ♗f4! a6?!

On 10 ... ♗h7, best is 11 ♗b5+ ♗c6 12 ♗e2 with an initiative due to the enormous pressure White acquires on all open lines (ideas based on ♗xd5 are especially appealing). However, this line represented the lesser evil for Black. The

dangers inherent in Black's position were shown in Kotronias-Theoharis, Athens (small 1992) after 11 ♗e2? (slightly worse than 11 ♗b5+) 11 ... ♗e7 12 0-0-0 ♗d5 13 ♗d4? ♗c4? 14 ♗e4 dxc4 15 ♗xc4 0-0-0 16 ♗g2 ♗c6 White had a winning continuation in 17 ♗e1! (Kourkounakis) 17 ... fxe6 18 ♗e6+, e.g. 18 ... ♗e8 19 ♗f4+ ♗e8 20 ♗xf4! or 18 ... ♗d7 19 ♗d1 ♗e8 20 ♗xc6 bxc6 21 ♗xc6+ ♗c7 22 ♗b8+ etc. This variation is not forced, of course, but the general impression is that White should be able to obtain an advantage no matter how Black plays.

Another possibility is 10 ... d4, but according to Timman it will prove insufficient after 11 ♗b5+ ♗e7 12 ♗g6+ (2 ♗f5+? a6d5 13 ♗d4 is also interesting) 12 ... fxe6 13 ♗f4 dxc3 14 ♗e5t. The fact that Karpov judges it necessary to resort to a move like 10 ... a6 when behind in development speaks volumes about the state of Black's game at this point.

11 ♗g2 ♗f6
12 ♗e2!

A typical reaction, preparing queenside castling while adding pressure on the e-file. It is quite uncharacteristic of Karpov to get in such a horrible mess after only a dozen moves in the opening, therefore this example serves to emphasize the virtues of the Advance Variation

even against the very best opposition.

Note the similarity of this position to Shabalov - Arbanis in the note to White's 7th move in Game 5, where White forewent the h-pawn advance.

12 ... ♗fxg4
13 ♗d4+ ♗e4 (67)



Black is already in a very unpleasant situation. After the simple 14 ♗xe4 dxe4 15 ♗xe4 the ex-World Champion would have found it hard to put up a respectable defence. Consider the following variations (analysis by Timman):

a) 15 ... f5 16 ♗b7 ♗d4 17 ♗e6+!+;
b) 15 ... ♗c6 16 0-0-0 ♗f6 17 ♗d6 ♗d6 18 ♗xc6+!+;
c) 15 ... ♗e5+ 16 b4! ♗b4+ 17 c3 ♗c4 18 ♗b7 ♗d8 19 ♗f1! ♗e4 20 ♗e6+!+.

The move Timman chose, on the other hand, allows Karpov to display the iron determination for which he is famous, by performing yet another defensive miracle.

14 ♗e4?! dxe4

15 0-0-0 ♘c7
 16 ♗xc5 ♘xc5
 17 ♘xe4 ♖g9



Despite his error on the 14th move, White still keeps a tremendous pull mainly due to his beautifully centralized knights. Black cannot grab a pawn by 17... ♗xc5? as he would be swiftly punished by 18 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 19 ♖h1 ♗c8 20 c3 ♘f3! 21 ♘xc5 (Timman). In this precarious situation, the ex-World Champion sticks to the only correct idea, trying to relieve his position by exchanges.

17... ♖d8
 18 ♘h5!

Trying the black bishop to the defence of the sensitive point g7 while preparing f2-f4-f5. Wrong would have been 18 ♗d8? ♗d8! when the black king escapes to the queenside.

18... ♘c6
 19 f4?

A hasty decision which throws away White's advantage. Before going on with his

plan, White should "squatch" any counterplay Black might have and the most appropriate way to do so is by playing 19 c3! Black then has a sad choice between:

a) 19... g6 20 ♘f6+ ♗e7 21 ♗d4 ♗d6 (21... gxf5? 22 ♘d5+!) 22 cxd6+ ♗d6 23 ♗d4+;

b) 19... ♗e5? (with the idea... f7-f5 20 f4 ♗f5 21 ♘b6! ♗d6 22 cxd6 g6 23 ♗d4+);

c) 19... ♗e7 20 ♘g7+ ♗f8 21 ♘h5 and Black is a pawn down without any compensation.

19... ♘d4!

Karpov seizes the opportunity to centralize his knight and evict the white queen from her fine post on e2. Most importantly, he has won the psychological battle since Timman has failed to make the most out of his highly advantageous position.

20 ♗g2 g6
 21 ♘hf6+ ♗e7
 22 ♗f2! ♖g9



According to Timman, White

could still maintain some pressure by 22 ♘d4?. The text move results in wholesale exchanges after the pseudo-combination which follows.

22... ♗xf4+!
 23 ♗xf4 ♘e2+
 24 ♗b1 ♘xf4
 25 ♗xd8 ♗xd8
 26 ♖f1+ ♗c7
 27 b4 ♘d5
 28 ♘xd5+ exd5
 29 ♘f6 ♗e6
 30 ♘xd5 g5

Black has managed to neutralize White's aggression and now proceeds to utilize his pawn majority on the kingside.

31 h5!

Too optimistic. More to the point was the immediate 31 c4 trying to gain a tempo over the game continuation. After both 31... f5 32 ♖f1 gxf4 33 ♖f2 and 31... gxf4 32 ♖f1 a draw would be in sight.

31... f5
 32 c4 f4
 33 ♖f1 f3
 34 ♖e6+ ♗d7
 35 ♖f6 g4
 36 ♖f4 ♗e7!

Black is already a little better.

37 ♘xe7 ♗xe7
 38 ♗g4 ♖f8
 39 ♖g1 ♖f4
 40 ♖f1 ♗e6 (??)

The picture has changed dramatically. White has been forced to part with his strong knight and his rook occupies a



passive post in front of the dangerous f-pawn. Still, the position is a draw with correct defensive play.

41 ♗c2 ♗xc4+
 42 ♗d3 ♗xb4
 43 ♗xf3 ♖h4
 44 ♖f1 ♗xh5
 45 ♖b1 ♗xc5
 46 ♗xb7 ♗d5
 47 ♗d7+!

Frustrated by the unexpected turn of events, Timman fails to spot his opponent's threat. If White wants to set up a defence along the fourth rank he should do it immediately by 47 ♖b6 ♖b5 48 ♖b4 when, in comparison with the game, Black cannot achieve the desired formation with pawns on a5 and h5 defended from the side by the black rook. Timman's suggestion of 47 ♖h7 should also be good enough for a draw.

47... ♗e5
 48 ♖e7+?

The last chance was 48 ♖h7. Now Karpov achieves the position he was aiming for, and

carries the day flawlessly with his nimble technique.

- 48 ... ♖f5
- 49 ♗f7+ ♗g6
- 50 ♗f4 ♗g5
- 51 ♖e4 a5
- 52 ♗e2 ♗f5
- 53 ♖e3 ♗g4
- 54 ♖c3 b5
- 55 ♖c8 b4
- 56 ♖g8+ ♖g5
- Also good is 56... ♖h3.
- 57 ♖a8 ♗g3
- 58 ♖f1 ♖f3
- 59 ♖c8 ♗e3
- 60 a4 ♗g4
- 61 ♖c5 (??)



61 ... b3!
A terrible mistake would have been 61... ♖a4?? 62 ♗e2 and the position is a theoretical draw, e.g. 62... ♖a1 63 ♖e5+ ♖d4 64 ♗f5! a4 65 ♗f4+ ♖e3 66 ♗f3+ ♖e4 67 ♗c7 ♖d4 68 ♗f3 and Black cannot make any progress. The only trap could be 68... a3 69 ♗d3 ♖c4 70 ♗f3 b3+ 71 ♖h3?? ♖b4+!, but the calm 71 ♖h2 produces a drawn position.

62 ♖e5+

On 62 ♖c3+ Timman offers the following win: 62... ♖d2 63 ♖a3 63 ♖h3 ♖a4 64 ♖b2+ ♖d1 65 ♖b5 ♗f4+ → 63... ♖e1+ (but not 63... ♖c7? 64 ♖h3 ♖a4 65 ♖b5 ♗f4+ 66 ♖e2 a4 67 ♖c5+ drawing).

- 62 ... ♖f3
- 63 ♖b5 ♗g3
- 64 ♗g1 ♖xe4+→

The game is decided. White could have been spared the rest by resigning here, but was probably kicking himself for missing so many wins in the early phases of the struggle.

65 ♖g5+ ♖h4 66 ♖c5 ♖g4+ 67 ♖h2 a4 68 ♖c3 ♖g2+ 69 ♖h1 ♖g4 70 ♖h2 ♖g2+ 71 ♖h1 ♖g3 72 ♖c4+ ♖g4 73 ♖c3 ♖b4 74 ♖a3 ♖g4 75 ♖c3 ♖g5 76 ♖h2 ♖b4 0-1

An absorbing fight and a tribute to the art of defence!

Game 10
Timman - Seirawan
Hilversum (2nd Match
Game) 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♖f5 4 ♗c3 e6 5 g4 ♘e6 6 ♗e2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 ♖e3

8 ... ♖b6! (??)

Black's most flexible and aggressive continuation, this line is currently thought to give White quite a few headaches. Early queen outings always look suspicious, but this is hardly the case here: the queen gives ample protection to the



o-pawn while at the same time furthering Black's plans of attacking the centre and bringing the king to relative safety on the queenside.

9 f4!

Clearly the best. Dubious is 9 h5?, merely driving the bishop where it wants to go. Although it is also mentioned elsewhere, since even top players have committed this sin it is worth repeating that such an advance is only apparently aggressive and in reality loses time. Perhaps the most famous example is Nunn-Seirawan, Laguna 1963, which continued 9... ♖h7 10 ♖d2 ♗c6 11 0-0-0? c4! 12 f4 ♖b5 (2... ♖a2; 12... 0-0-0 in Game 8) 13 f5 b5 (??)

14 ♗xd5! b4! (not 14... ♖ha2 15 ♗c3 ♖h1+ 16 ♗b1 ♗b4 17 ♗c3 or 17 ♗g2 with good play for White, while in the important variation 14... ♖b2+ 15 ♗e2 e4 16 ♗c3 0-0-0 17 ♗g2 there is more than enough compensation for the piece, e.g. 17... ♗xd4 18 ♖e3 and now



White is much better after either 18... ♗c6 19 ♗xd5 ♗xe5 20 ♖b7+ or 18... b4 19 ♗xd5 ♗b5 (not 19... ♗e6 20 ♗b6+ a6 21 ♗xc6 and Black's position is a mess) 20 ♗f1 etc.) 15 ♗e7! ♖xc7 16 ♗f4 c3 17 ♗g2 ♗g7 18 ♖c4 (wrong is 18 d5 e4 19 ♗d5 ♗xd5 20 ♖c5 ♖e7+, while 18 fxe6 b3! 19 e6?+ ♖d7 20 a6 21 ♖c3 ♖xc3 leads to an unclear position, according to Nunn) 18... 0-0-0 19 fxe6 (Nunn offers 19 d5! with an unclear position; however, my research shows that after 19... e4 19... ♗e5 20 ♗e6 20 ♖h1 or 19... ♗e5 20 ♖e6+ ♖b8 21 d6 with complications favouring White since the black army is split in two by the enemy pawn wedge and there are serious mate threats) 20 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♗xd5 Black should avoid both 21... ♗e5 22 ♖h1 with great pressure, and 21... ♗e5 22 ♖b7+ ♖b8 23 ♗xd3+ ♖hd3 24 ♖b6 when Black's faraway pieces lack the time to assist their king, e.g. 24... ♖c7 25 ♖d6 ♖e7 26 ♖d5 or 24

... 27 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000

line and the most White can hope for is a draw; therefore the whole idea may be dismissed as theoretically unsound.

Another option for White that has been tried at top level is 9 0-0, encountered in A. Sokolov - Karpov, Linares Ct. 09 1987. They continued 9 ... 0-0 10 0-0-0? (74)



10 ... h5 11 dxc5 12 0-0 13 0-0 14 0-0 15 0-0 16 0-0 17 0-0 18 0-0 19 0-0 20 0-0 21 0-0 22 0-0 23 0-0 24 0-0 25 0-0 26 0-0 27 0-0 28 0-0 29 0-0 30 0-0 31 0-0 32 0-0 33 0-0 34 0-0 35 0-0 36 0-0 37 0-0 38 0-0 39 0-0 40 0-0 41 0-0 42 0-0 43 0-0 44 0-0 45 0-0 46 0-0 47 0-0 48 0-0 49 0-0 50 0-0 51 0-0 52 0-0 53 0-0 54 0-0 55 0-0 56 0-0 57 0-0 58 0-0 59 0-0 60 0-0 61 0-0 62 0-0 63 0-0 64 0-0 65 0-0 66 0-0 67 0-0 68 0-0 69 0-0 70 0-0 71 0-0 72 0-0 73 0-0 74 0-0 75 0-0 76 0-0 77 0-0 78 0-0 79 0-0 80 0-0 81 0-0 82 0-0 83 0-0 84 0-0 85 0-0 86 0-0 87 0-0 88 0-0 89 0-0 90 0-0 91 0-0 92 0-0 93 0-0 94 0-0 95 0-0 96 0-0 97 0-0 98 0-0 99 0-0 100 0-0

10 0-0 11 0-0 12 0-0 13 0-0 14 0-0 15 0-0 16 0-0 17 0-0 18 0-0 19 0-0 20 0-0 21 0-0 22 0-0 23 0-0 24 0-0 25 0-0 26 0-0 27 0-0 28 0-0 29 0-0 30 0-0 31 0-0 32 0-0 33 0-0 34 0-0 35 0-0 36 0-0 37 0-0 38 0-0 39 0-0 40 0-0 41 0-0 42 0-0 43 0-0 44 0-0 45 0-0 46 0-0 47 0-0 48 0-0 49 0-0 50 0-0 51 0-0 52 0-0 53 0-0 54 0-0 55 0-0 56 0-0 57 0-0 58 0-0 59 0-0 60 0-0 61 0-0 62 0-0 63 0-0 64 0-0 65 0-0 66 0-0 67 0-0 68 0-0 69 0-0 70 0-0 71 0-0 72 0-0 73 0-0 74 0-0 75 0-0 76 0-0 77 0-0 78 0-0 79 0-0 80 0-0 81 0-0 82 0-0 83 0-0 84 0-0 85 0-0 86 0-0 87 0-0 88 0-0 89 0-0 90 0-0 91 0-0 92 0-0 93 0-0 94 0-0 95 0-0 96 0-0 97 0-0 98 0-0 99 0-0 100 0-0

It seems that Sokolov's idea is dubious, which makes it hard to understand the reason Karpov deviated from 8 ... 0-0 in his Delft game against Timman (9 f4) was not known at the time). Karpov later explained that 8 ... 0-0 was in fact a blunder, as he forgot the correct move order!

9 ... 0-0
On 9 ... 0-0 Nunn gives 10 f5 e5 11 0-0 12 0-0. It is also worth noting that Black may not attempt to take advantage of the fact that the square f4 is now occupied in order to play 9 ... h5, for similar reasons: after 10 f5 e5 11 g5 the position is strategically lost.

10 f5 0-0?
Risky is 10 ... e5 11 0-0 with a messy position, but favourable to White. Black voluntarily accepts that his bishop will be shut in, hoping to extricate it later under better circumstances.

11 0-0 0-0
12 0-0 0-0 c4

The strategy for both sides is clearly outlined: White would like to destroy the base of the black central pawn chain, Black

is playing for higher stakes since he is after the white king. A sharp game is the outcome, where the slightest mistake can lead to catastrophe, therefore this specific line is critical for the variation as a whole.

13 0-0 0-0
Black is now posed for a massive attack on the queen-side involving the pawn advance ... b7-b5-b4 as well as irritating invasions on b4 with the minor pieces. The best White can do is start grabbing pawns, both players burning the bridges behind them.

14 fxe6 h5
Naturally, the debate caused by this game continued in the years that followed. The encounter Prasad-Ravi, India 1991, saw Black winning quickly after 14 ... 0-0 15 exf7 16 0-0 17 0-0 18 0-0 19 0-0 20 0-0 21 0-0 22 0-0 23 0-0 24 0-0 25 0-0 26 0-0 27 0-0 28 0-0 29 0-0 30 0-0 31 0-0 32 0-0 33 0-0 34 0-0 35 0-0 36 0-0 37 0-0 38 0-0 39 0-0 40 0-0 41 0-0 42 0-0 43 0-0 44 0-0 45 0-0 46 0-0 47 0-0 48 0-0 49 0-0 50 0-0 51 0-0 52 0-0 53 0-0 54 0-0 55 0-0 56 0-0 57 0-0 58 0-0 59 0-0 60 0-0 61 0-0 62 0-0 63 0-0 64 0-0 65 0-0 66 0-0 67 0-0 68 0-0 69 0-0 70 0-0 71 0-0 72 0-0 73 0-0 74 0-0 75 0-0 76 0-0 77 0-0 78 0-0 79 0-0 80 0-0 81 0-0 82 0-0 83 0-0 84 0-0 85 0-0 86 0-0 87 0-0 88 0-0 89 0-0 90 0-0 91 0-0 92 0-0 93 0-0 94 0-0 95 0-0 96 0-0 97 0-0 98 0-0 99 0-0 100 0-0

Qb3 20 Qh3+ Qb8 21 bxc3 Qd4 22 Qh1 and after the passed pawns are more than enough compensation for the exchange. A better try for Black is 18... Qe6?, as after 19 Qxd5! Qxd5 20 Qxc4 Qe4 (not 20... Qe5 21 Qxc4? Qe5 22 g4h6 g4h6 23 Qh1!) an exotic position arises (75):



The threat ... Qf8-b4 seems devastating, but White can (and must) sacrifice his queen by 21 Qxd5! Qb4 22 Qb3! with crazy complications:

0 22... Qe5 23 g4h6 g4h6 Q3... Qxc3 24 bxc3 g4h6 25 Qe2 24 Qxc4! bxc3 25 Qb4 with the better chances for White:

2 22... Qe1+ 23 Qe2 Qe5 Q3... Qh3? 24 Qh3+ Qxb4 Qxb4 25 Qh1+ 24 g4h6 g4h6 25 Qh1! when the position is difficult to assess. My feeling is that the pawn on f7 will gradually tie all of Black's forces to its blockade.

However, that is not the end of the story. Instead of the natural 19... Qxd5, Black has

two interesting alternatives at his disposal:

a) 19... Qe4? (sacrificing a third pawn, but it is evident that the move creates dangerous threats) 20 Qxc4 Qe4 21 b2 Q2 Qh3? Qe4? 21... Qe3+ Q2... Qe2 22 b4 Qe4 23 Qe3? Qe3 24 Qxb3 Qxd5 25 Qxd5 Qxd5 seems better for White in view of his mobile pawns! 22 Qe4 Qxd5? Q2... Qxd5 23 Qe1 Qe7 Q3... Qb4 24 Qb4 is 2) 24 Qh1 with an unclear position.

b) 19... b5! is a cunning idea from the Greek master Loukizidis, but White is not without resources! 20 Qd2! with a wide choice for Black:

b0 20... b4? 21 Qxc4 Qxc4 22 Qxc4 Qe4 23 g4h6!:

b3 20... Qxd5! 21 Qh3+ Qb8 22 Qe1 b4 Q2... Qe1 23 Qxc4 Qb4 24 Qe2+ 23 Qxc2 bxc3+ 24 bxc3!:

b3 20... Qe4? 21 Qe1! (this has to be played immediately, as 21 Qh3+? Qb7 22 Qe1 Qd8! 23 Qxc2 Qxd5 is bad for White in view of the unfortunate position of the rook on a2 - compare with line b33 below) and now:

b30 21... Qxd1 22 Qxc2 Qxd5 (threatening... b5-b4 or... Qf8-b4) 23 Qe2 b4 24 Qxc4 Qe7 25 Qxc4+;

b32 21... b4 22 Qh3+ Qb7 23 Qxc2 bxc3+ 24 bxc3 Qxd5 25 Qb4+; after 24... Qxb? White, despite being down a rook for three pawns, exploits the in-

secure position of the black king by attacking directly: 25 Qb2+ Qe6 26 Qxc7+ Qe5 Qb1



27 d8 Qxd5+ Q7... Qd3 28 Qe2 Qe4 29 Qe5 28 Qe2 Qd3 29 Qe2 Qe4 30 Qxd5 Qxd5 31 e6 and the threat 32 Qc3 together with the passed pawns guarantee an easy win;

b33 21... Qxc4 22 Qh3+ Qb7 23 Qxc4 Qxd5 24 Qe2 Qb4 25 Qb4+ Qxb4 26 g5 when White's far advanced pawns may prove stronger than a rook;

b4) 20... Qb8? (The idea of this move is to prevent White from transposing to the previous lines by Qf7-h3 as that would be met by... b5-b4, trapping the white queen) 21 b3! Q2 Qe2? is probably inadequate in view of 21... Qe4! 22 Qe1 Qd1! 23 Qxc2 Qxd5 24 e6 Qb7! (worse is 24... b4? 25 Qf4+ Qb7 26 Qe3 c3+ 27 bxc3 Qxc2 28 Qd3 with a strong attack, or 24... Qb4? 25 Qb4+ Qxb4 26 e7 Qxc2 27 exd8 Qe8 28 Qf4+ Qb7 29 g4) 25 Qf4 (25 Qe1 Qb4 26 e7 Qxc3 27

exd8 Qe8 28 bxc3 hcg5!) 25... Qb4 26 Qb4+ Qxb4 27 e7 Qxf7! 28 exd8 Qxd8 and White is in trouble as his pawn on d4 is hanging) 21... Qxd5 22 Qe1 b4! 23 Qxc2 bxc3+ 24 Qxc3 reaching a complex endgame (77):



White has three pawns for a piece and, at first glance, his king seems exposed. However, closer inspection shows that it is by no means easy to take advantage of this factor:

b4) 24... Qb4+ 25 Qxc4 Qe4 suggests itself. If White mechanically reacts by 26 g4h6? a horrible surprise is in store for him: 26... a5! (Threatening 27... Qxc5+ and 28... Qc6!) 27 Qh3 Qd1! 28 hcg? Qxc5+ 29 dxc5 Qxh4+ mating anyway.

However, there is a way out in 26 Qe6! Despite the huge material investments this move entails it has the advantage of breaking the mating nets and sufficiently disturbing the coordination of the black pieces. After 26... Qxb1 27 Qxc5

White gets four pawns and tremendous activity for the sacrificed rook but the real point of 26 ♖a1 is revealed only after 26 ... ♗b7 27 ♖ac1 ♗xc6 28 ♗xb4 ♗b8+ 29 ♗c3 ♖xb1 30 gxb6 gxb6 31 c4! when White's four connected passed pawns look like a tidal wave capable of overcoming all kinds of resistance. A truly remarkable case!

b42) 24 ... cxb3 25 cxb3 ♘g4 is met by 26 ♘g2. If Black plays 25 ... ♖b4+ first, then after 26 ♗b2 ♘c4 ♖e6 ... ♘xd4 27 ♗c4+! White has the intermediate move 27 gxb6 to be followed by ♗h1-g1. Also worth analysing after 25 ... ♖b4+ is the daring 26 ♗c4!?

b43) Finally, the intriguing 24 ... ♖e4!7 might well be Black's best. After 25 bxc4 ♘c4 (25 ... ♖b4+ 26 ♗b3 is also unclear) 26 ♗b2 ♗c7 27 ♘g1 an unclear position is reached with many tactical chances for both sides.

Let us return to the main game, after Seirawan's bold 14 ... b5.

15 exf7 ♘ge7
16 ♘e6 b4 (79)

The fight has warmed up unusually rapidly as a result of Black's double pawn sacrifice for the initiative. Black's forces on the queenside are extremely menacing, so it seems the wrong moment for materialistic thoughts; White must give



up a piece in order to stay alive.
17 ♘d8?

An indication that White has not evaluated the situation properly, as now Black obtains an overwhelming attack. Timman should have preserved his agile knight by 17 ♘c5! , reaching an unclear position after 17 ... bxc3 (Seirawan points out 17 ... ♗b5 18 ♘b4 ♗b6 19 ♗b1 ♘c8 20 b3 ♘b6 21 e6 ♘c5 22 ♘c5 c3 23 ♗b2+! 18 ♗xc3 ♗xa2 (18 ... ♗a7?) 19 ♖b3± (analysis by Timman) White has two pawns plus positional pressure for the piece, but Black's chances should not be underestimated.

17 ... ♗d8!1
18 a3! (79)



The only move to avoid immediate disaster.

18 ... bxc3?

Failing to reap the fruits of his labour. As Seirawan himself points out in *Inside Chess*, 18 ... bxc3 would have been deadly. I quote the American Grandmaster's analysis:

a) 19 ♘c2 axc2+ 20 ♗b2 20 ♗b1 ♘c3 with the idea ... ♘c6-b4 wins! 20 ... ♘c8 21 c3 ♗b5+ 22 ♗a1 ♘a5 23 ♘c1 ♗b6.
b) 19 ♗b1 ♘b4 20 ♗c1 ♘c6 21 b3 and now 21 ... ♘c2+ or 21 ... ♘b5+.
c) 19 ♗c2? ♗a1+.

19 ♗xc3 ♘c8
20 g5!

The pawn on f7 needs support from an open g-file to prove its strength. As it soon becomes evident, Black's mistake on the 18th move has granted White excellent fighting chances.

20 ... ♘b6
21 gxb6 gxb6
22 ♖d2!

Overprotecting the critical b4 square and giving his queen freedom of movement along the third rank. White intends to meet the apparently crushing 22 ... ♘b4? by 23 ♗bxb4! ♖xb4 24 ♖xb4 (Seirawan), when Black is completely lost despite his material advantage.

22 ... ♗a4!
23 ♖b1 a5
24 ♗g1 ♖b4
25 ♗g8-?

Timman's intention undoubtedly was to divert the black bishop from its deadly surveillance of c2. However, an excellent piece of analysis by John van der Wiel proves that White missed a winning continuation here. I quote the Dutch GM's analysis from the magazine *Inside Chess*:

"25 ♗g8+ is in fact a mistake. Timman should have played 25 ♖c4!, when Black has two recaptures:

a) 25 ... ♘xb4 26 ♗g8+ ♗c7 (26 ... ♗c7 27 e6+ is no improvement, while 26 ... ♗g8 27 ♗g8♗+ ♖g8 28 b3 ♗a2+ 29 ♗c1 cxb3 30 cxb3 ♗b7 31 ♗b2 wins for White) 27 b3!

a) 27 ... ♗b3+ 28 ♗b3 cxb3; White now has his choice of 29 ♗f8 or 29 ♖b4 bxc2 30 ♗c1 cxd1+ 31 ♗a1 ♗g8 32 ♗g8♗+ ♖g8 33 ♖a5 winning.

a) 27 ... ♗a2+ 28 ♗c1 ♖a2 29 ♗b2 stops Black's attack:
b) 25 ... axb4 (the recapture intended by Seirawan) 26 ♗g8+! ♗c7! (26 ... ♗g8 27 ♗g8♗+ ♖g8 28 ♗f3 causes an unpleasant interruption of Black's attack. If 28 ... b3 (28 ... ♗b2+ gives White the better ending) 29 ♗f8+! ♗c7 30 ♗f7+ ♘d7 31 cxb3 cxb3 32 ♖c3 is good for White. The series of queen checks is to dominate the black bishop) 27 ♗f8 (this is best; if 27 ♗h8 then 27 ... b3! is a rude awakening) 27 ... bxc3 28 ♗g7+ ♘d7 29 ♗d6+ ♖b6 30

♙xh7 ♙x7 31 ♙xc3 and with his extra pawns White should win."

25 ... ♙xg8! Timman's recommendation of 26 axd4 ♘d7 27 bxc6 seems better for White. In mutual time-trouble, Black rightly prefers to keep his dangerous bishop.

26 ♙xg8 ♙+ ♘xg8
27 ♙f3! ♘xd4!
28 ♙f6+ ♙c7
29 ♙g6 (80)



29 ... ♘c5??

van der Wiel discovered 29 ... ♘e6! (probably missed under the influence of time trouble and the sudden domination of the g8-bishop - also working during the post-mortem), when White is defenceless. Even after the best line 30 ♘f4 (30 ♘xb4 ♘f5 31 ♘b6 ♙b7 32 ♙b5 ♙xc2+ 33 ♙a5 ♘d4 30 ... ♘f5 31 e6 ♙b7 32 ♙g7 ♙c6! 33 ♙xd4 ♙xc2+ 34 ♙d4 (very attractive is 34 ♙d2 c3 35 ♘c1 ♙b4+ 36 ♙b3 ♘c2) 34 ... c3 White has to give up."

30 ♘e3 ♘xc2
31 ♘xc5 ♘xa3+
32 ♙e1 ♘d7
33 ♘a3 c3
34 ♙d6+ ♙d8

Black's flag fell in this hopeless position.

It is quite notable that Timman, in his notes to this game (published in *Informator* 508, gives 25 ♙g8! as the only move and fails to spot 29 ... ♘e6, thinking that White wins after 29 ♙g6. I can explain this slip through my personal experience, knowing that chess-players are asked to comment on important games during tournaments or immediately after, when the nervous tension is still there.

1-0

This is probably the most important game for the assessment of the 4 ♘c3 e6 variation.

Game II

Kotronias - Spielman
New York 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2 c5 7 h4 h6 8 ♘e3

8 ... cxd6

9 ♘xd4 ♘b4 (80)

In this continuation Black plays simple chess, trying to complete the development of his pieces as quickly as possible without worrying about small concessions in the centre. This

is an acceptable method, since the bishop move prepares a comfortable development of the king's knight.



10 h5 ♘h7!

The best move in the position, 10 ... ♘e4 (given as! by Seirawan) was played in Timman-Seirawan, Tilburg 1990, but it seems to me that inserting f2-f3 favours White. After 11 f3 ♘h7 the game continued 12 ♘d3 ♘d3 13 ♙d3 ♘d7 14 0-0-0 ♘xc3 15 ♙xc3 ♙c8 16 ♙d4 ♘xc5 17 ♘f4 ♘xc6 18 ♘f5 ♙f8 19 ♘b6+ ♘g7 20 ♘xe6 ♘xe7 21 ♙e1 ♙g8 22 ♘xe7 ♙e7 23 ♙d5 ♙c7 24 ♙xc7 ♙xc7 25 ♙b5? (Seirawan suggests 25 ♙d8+ with a slight advantage for White, while now it is Black who gets the upper hand) 25 ... ♙f8 26 f4 ♙e7 27 b3 ♙d8 28 ♙d1 ♙d1+ 29 ♙d1 ♙b6 30 a4 a6 31 ♙b4 a5 32 ♙d2 efd4 33 ♙f4 ♙e5 34 ♙f5 ♙e6 35 e4 g6 36 ♙e5 f5 37 gxf5+ gxf5 38 ♙e3 ♙g7 39 ♙d4 ♙d3 40 ♙e5 ♙f6 41 b4 ♙d3 42 a5 ♙d4 43 ♙d5 ♙b4 44 ♙b6+ ♙g5 45 ♙b6 ♙d4 46 ♙xh7 ♙xc5+ 47 c5 ♙d5 48

♙f4 49 ♙b6 ♙d2 50 ♙d1 ♙d2+ 51 ♙b6 ♙e4 52 c6 ♙b8 53 c7 ♙d8 54 ♙d7 ♙xc7+ 55 ♙xc7 f3 56 ♙b6 f2 57 ♙g7 ♙f3 58 ♙f7+ ♙e2 59 ♙e7+ ♙e2 60 ♙f7 ♙e1 61 ♙e7+ ♙f1 62 ♙f7 a5 63 ♙c5 ♙e2 and ♙-e1.

However, the natural 12 ♙d2 is stronger, for example 12 ... ♘d7 13 a9 ♘xc3! (13 ... ♘a5 is better, but 14 f4 ♘e7 ♘-♘d7-c5 is no longer possible) 15 ♙d3 leaves White on top! 14 ♙xc3 ♘xc5 15 ♙b5+ ♘d7 16 ♘f5 ecf5 17 0-0-0 with a tremendous attack on Black's exposed king (82):



The point is that with the pawn on f3 there is no defence by interposing the knight on e4 after 17 ... ♘f5 18 ♘c5 ♙c7 19 ♙e1+. Thus, relatively best for Black is to decline the sacrifice by playing 16 ... ♙d5 17 gxf5 ♘f6, although the bishop pair and the open g-file give White good chances for a successful onslaught.

11 ♙d2

Another important option here is 11 ♘d3 ♘d3 12 ♙d3

♘d7 13 ♘d2! (32) (1) 0-0-0 is similar to Timman-Seirawan mentioned above, while 13 f4 ♘c8 14 ♘e2 ♘c3? 15 ♘c3 ♘c5 is difficult to evaluate as Black gets e4 for his knight!



13 ... ♘c8 (13 ... ♘c3 14 ♘c3 ♘e8 15 ♘c3) 14 0-0-0!, with a complicated struggle ahead, slightly favourable to the first player.

11 ... ♘d7
12 e3?! ♘e5!

Black should have grabbed the e-pawn by 12 ... ♘c3! 13 ♘c3 ♘e5 as there is no clear refutation at White's disposal.

13 b4?

White thoughtlessly over-extends on the queenside. Correct was 13 f4! keeping a slight advantage, while now the balance swings slightly towards Black's side.

13 ... ♘b6!
14 f4

Seirawan gives '14 f4!'. In the post-mortem Speelman and I agreed that the position is unclear, but when I analysed alone I could not find a proper

place for my king and concluded that the position is unsatisfactory for White.

14 ... ♘e7
15 ♘cb5?

Appropriate here is 15 ♘d3, but White persists in an attacking approach while his king is still unsafe.

15 ... 0-0
16 ♘d6? ♘c6!

Now Black is almost winning, since White suffers from much worse development. The d6-knight, being isolated from fellow pieces may prove to be a liability instead of the hoped-for powerhouse.

17 ♘xc6 bxc6
18 ♘d3 (34)



18 ... f6!
Undermining the foundation of White's outpost.

19 ♘xh7+ ♘xh7
20 ♘xb6 axb6
21 ♘d3+ ♘g8
22 0-0-0 c5?

Trying to be 'Tancy' where simple means are effective. Speelman saw during the game the correct 22 ... fxe5 ♘g5

and ♘1 ♘d6 (24 g4? ♘e6 24 ... ♘e7 25 g4? ♘f6 26 ♘g5 ♘h7, but was afraid of 27 ♘e4 which achieves nothing after 27 ... dxe4 28 hxg7 ♘hg7 29 ♘c7 ♘f7 30 ♘d7 ♘d7 and White is clearly lost.

23 ♘g6 ♘e7
24 g5

Due to Black's 22nd move mistake, White has taken over the initiative. This opening is difficult to handle indeed!

24 ... fxe5
25 f5! ♘xe5
26 ♘xc6+ ♘xc6
27 fxe6 ♘f6
28 ♘b5! ♘c8
29 e7! ♘e6 (35)



30 e8♙!

A rare but noteworthy motif. No matter how Black recaptures, he must surrender the exchange.

30 ... ♘xc6
31 ♘c7

As a result of all the complications, White even enjoys a slight advantage here. Nevertheless, Speelman manages to find enough counterplay to

nullify any danger.

31 ... cxb4
32 axb4 ♘f3!
33 ♘xe8 ♘xe8
34 ♘xd5 g4

This advance guarantees Black adequate counterchances. Having survived a near disaster, I decided to settle for a draw, ignoring the fact I was an exchange up.

35 ♘f1 ♘e2
36 ♘f5! g6!
37 hxg6?! ♘g7
38 ♘xf3

The ending is drawn, as both sides will sacrifice their rook for the enemy passed pawn, therefore ...

This is the only time I have ever been in danger while playing the Caro Advance Variation, while it is obvious that improvements for White are available. Since I have essayed 3 e5 against many strong grandmasters (Speelman was at his peak when this game was played), I believe this fact is enough in itself to demonstrate the inherent strength of the 4 ♘c3 system.

Conclusion

6 ... c5 is hard to crack, but it leads to the sort of game that 3 e5 players usually aim for: sharp positions, full of thrust and counterthrust, demanding excellent preparation and understanding of the dynamic

aspects of the opening. Many lines are quite entertaining, but when you are sitting at the board you do not always think the same!

Summing up, it seems that the future of the Caro Advance Variation as a whole will be mostly determined by developments in this line.

3 The 4 ... ♗b6 Variation

Game 12

Nimzowitsch - Capablanca
New York 1927

The game that follows was awarded a special prize for the best played game in the tournament. After a dubious opening, Capablanca manages to freeze his opponent's demonstration on the kingside and wins elegantly by penetrating the enemy position with his heavy pieces. The ideas behind the opening of this game have been analysed in some detail in Chapter 1, therefore here the analysis will concentrate more on the middlegame aspects.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5

4 ♗d3??!

I quote Irving Chernev's annotation from his book *Capablanca's Best Chess Endings* (Atkins-Capablanca, London 1922): "White hastens to get rid of his good bishop, a strategic error repeated by Nimzowitsch in his famous 1927 encounter against Capablanca". Wise words, but for the wrong reason! The truth is that Chernev's comment is absolutely

correct, since it accompanies White's 4th and not his 5th move in the above-mentioned games. White unwisely exchanged his good bishop before Black moved his queen to b6. However, this is merely a result of hero-worship rather than objective thinking, as Capablanca continued in both games with a direct transposition to our analysis, and was still praised by Chernev.

4 ... ♗xd3

5 ♗xc3 e6

6 ♗c3 ♗b6?!

7 ♗e2 c5?!

A premature thrust. More to the point is 7 ... ♗e7, as we shall see in the next three games. Another option is 7 ... ♗b6, but it will be analysed in Kotrnias-Khalifman (Game 14) since after 7 ... ♗e7 8 O-O ♗b6 it transposes.

8 dxc5 ♗xc5

9 O-O ♗e7?!

9 ... ♗d7 10 ♗e4 ♗c7 11 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗g3 ♗e7 13 ♗g7 ♗f8 14 ♗h3 ♗e5 15 ♗e3 ♗c7 16 ♗d4 ♗g6 17 ♗h3 a6 18 ♗f1 O-O-O 19 ♗g5! Kotrnias-Gausel, Reykjavik 1988, White's

plan is to follow up with ♠b3-g3, h2-h4

10 ♠a4?

The opening play has been inaccurate, but in those days people tended to focus their attention more on the middle-game. To set the historical record straight, White misses a good chance to gain the advantage by 10 b4! (86)



This was missed not only by Nimzowitsch, but also by various commentators (including Chernov). After 10 ... ♠b4 (10 ... ♠b4 11 ♠b1 ♠a5 12 ♠b6+) 11 ♠b5 ♠a6 12 ♠a3 ♠a5 13 ♠a5 ♠a5 14 ♠d6+ ♠e7 15 ♠g3 ♠g8 16 ♠e7 White gets a clear advantage. The game continuation is much less enterprising, playing into Capa's hands.

- 10 ... ♠c6
11 ♠a5 ♠xc5
12 ♠e3 ♠c7
13 f4 ♠f5
14 c3?

Preferable was Alekhine's recommendation of 14 ♠f2 (to be followed by c2-c4), when

White might still have counted on an advantage. One gets the impression that Nimzowitsch's play is a little too passive for the occasion.

- 14 ... ♠c6
15 ♠d1 g6
16 g4??

And now he bursts forth with this inopportune gesture. In fact this is a positional blunder, allowing Capa to stabilize the pawn structure on the kingside.

- 16 ... ♠xc3
17 ♠xc3 (87)



17 ... h5?

Analysts have failed to comment on this, considering White's reply forced. However, as the next note proves, the move demanded precise calculations and deep evaluation of a certain position.

18 g5?
Losing kingside pawn mobility, but others were uninspiring: a) 18 h3? hxg5 19 hxg5 0-0-0+ as Black threatens both ... ♠h8-h4 and ... g5-g5
b) 18 f5 gxf5 (18 ... ♠xc5? 19

♠a5 ♠xc5 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 ♠d4 is equal) 19 gxf5 0-0-0! (19 ... ♠xc5? 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 ♠d4 0-0-0 22 ♠b5+) and now,

b) 20 ♠f4 ♠xc5 21 fxe6 fxe6 22 ♠d4? (22 ♠a6 ♠g4 24 ♠d2 ♠b6+ 25 ♠d4 ♠g4, 22 ♠a6? ♠g8+ 23 ♠h1 ♠xc4) 22 ... ♠e4 23 ♠h? (on 23 ... ♠xc6+ ♠b4, threatening ... ♠f8 23 ... ♠g8 24 ♠h1 ♠d8 25 ♠e4 after 25 ♠a8 ♠d7 26 ♠e4+ ♠c6 27 ♠xc6+ bxc6 28 h3 ♠b6 29 ♠d6 ♠f5 Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn because of his active king and central pawn roller) 25 ... ♠d6! (preparing ... e6-e5, or ... ♠c6-b8) with excellent chances for ♠ack; 26 ♠xc6? is a bad mistake because of 26 ... ♠d4! 27 ♠a8+ ♠c? 28 ♠a6+ ♠b6 29 ♠a6 ♠d1+ 30 ♠g2 ♠e3++ with mate soon to follow.

h3 20 ♠d4 (relatively best) 20 ... ♠b6 21 ♠h1 c2 ♠h3 ♠b8 22 ♠h1 ♠a4 23 exd4 ♠c4? 21 ... ♠g8 22 ♠h3 ♠a4 23 exd4 ♠b8! and Black is better because he has a safer king.

18 ... 0-0

Black has a strategically won game. His king is safe on the kingside while on the other wing he enjoys the prospect of a minority attack. However, the way in which Capablanca makes use of his advantages is a priceless lesson for every chessplayer.

19 ♠d4 ♠b6

- 20 ♠f2 ♠c8
21 a3 ♠c7
22 ♠d3 ♠a5
23 ♠e2 ♠e8
24 ♠g2 ♠c6
25 ♠d2 ♠xc8
26 ♠e2 ♠e7
27 ♠d2 ♠c4

Capa's plans begin to take shape. His knight is ready to jump to f5 in order to challenge White's stronghold on d4. That would allow his rooks to penetrate into the heart of the enemy position.

- 28 ♠h3? ♠g7
29 ♠f2 a5
30 ♠e2 ♠f5!
31 ♠xf5+ gxf5
32 ♠f3

On 32 ♠h5? the reply 32 ... ♠h8 33 ♠f3 ♠h4 wins easily.

32 ... ♠g6 (89)



Everything goes as planned. In the next few moves Black improves the positions of his pieces, by slowly infiltrating through the half-open c-file.

- 33 ♠d2 ♠e4
34 ♠d4 ♠c4
35 ♠f2 ♠b5

36 ♀g3 ♀xc4!
Abandoning the plan of a minority attack by ... ♀f5-b3, ... b7-b5-b4, as he gets the chance to create a new weakness on e4. White cannot recapture with the rook in view of the reply 37 ... ♀e2, winning instantly.

37 cxd4 ♀c4
38 ♀g2 b5!
39 ♀g1 b4
40 axb4 axb4
41 ♀g2 ♀c1!

Capablanca is tightening the noose move by move. No doubt, Nimzowitsch must have felt extremely uncomfortable during the final phase of the game.

42 ♀g3 ♀h1!
43 ♀d3

The only move. On 43 ♀e2 (trying to prevent ... ♀e4-e6, the simplest is 43 ... ♀xc2 44 ♀xc2 ♀g1+, winning the d-pawn.

43 ... ♀e1
44 ♀f3 ♀d1
45 b3

White has entered a zug-zwang situation. The proof:

a) 45 h3 ♀g1+ ♀b4 ♀g4+;
b) 45 ♀b3 ♀d2+;
c) 45 ♀e3 ♀f1 46 ♀e2 ♀g1+;
d) 45 ♀b3 ♀e4+;
45 ... ♀c1!
46 ♀e3 ♀f1 ♀g1
0-1

A masterly conclusion by a great champion.



Game 13
Kotronias - King
New York 1990

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♀f5 4
♀e3
4 ... ♀b6 1990



This is the main alternative to 4... e6. Black wants to avoid the labyrinth of variations already examined and steer the game to positional channels. For quite some time 4... ♀b6 was successful as most players with White concentrated their efforts on the risky continuation 5 g4! ♀d7. However, it seems extravagant to play 5 g4 when the black bishop still has

the option to retreat to d7, the resulting positions closely resemble the French except for the extra move g2-g4, which looks more like a weakness than a threatening gesture. For example, White's overextension gave him no advantage in the game Timman-Kamsky, Tilburg 1990, after 6 ♀e4 ♀c7 7 ♀e3 (Editor's note: 7 ♀e5 e6 8 ♀d3 h6 F Klinger-Hodgson, Oakham 1984) 7 ... e6 8 ♀e2 ♀e7 9 f4 ♀e7 10 ♀f3 h5 11 h3 ♀g6 12 ♀c3 ♀e7 13 ♀e2 ♀b4 14 ♀d4 ♀d4+ 15 ♀f2 ♀c2+ 16 ♀h2 h4 17 h4g4 0-0-0 18 0-0-0 e3. Kamsky suggests 15 ♀f1 ♀e7 16 g4d5 0-0-0 17 ♀f3 as a possible improvement for White, but I do not know many players who would be willing to venture this.

5 ♀d3!
White exchanges his 'good' bishop for the sake of quick development. Although this may not suit everyone's style, practice has shown that it is not easy for Black to reach equality. Remarkably enough, Seirawan's recent book on the Caro Advance does not even mention this move at this specific moment; our Main Game and others are mentioned there only through transpositions, even though the correct move order is 4 ♀e3 and only after 4... ♀b6, 5 ♀d3.

5 ... ♀d3
Extremely risky is 5 ...

♀xd4! After 6 ♀f3! ♀g4 7 h3:

a) 7 ... ♀g2 8 ♀f1 ♀h3 9 ♀f1 ♀xc2 ♀9 ... ♀h5 10 ♀g5 ♀xc2 11 ♀xc2 ♀d3 12 ♀g2-1 10 ♀xc2 10 ♀xc2?!, e.g. 10 ... ♀h5? 11 ♀g5 ♀h1 12 ♀xc2 ♀d3 13 ♀g2, therefore Black must retreat with 10... ♀e8 and face a strong attack in exchange for a minimal material investment by White. Editor's note: Lasseen-Bergmann, Danish League 1991/92 saw Black try 10 ... ♀d7 but then he had problems developing: 11 ♀xc2 e6 12 ♀d3 ♀e7 13 ♀d4 ♀f5 14 ♀d5 e5 15 0-0-0 g6 16 ♀e4 ♀e7 16 ... ♀g7 17 ♀d5 e5 18 ♀d5 0-0 19 ♀f6- ♀d6 20 ♀d7 ♀d7 21 ♀d5 17 ♀d5 ♀d7 18 ♀d7 ♀d7 19 ♀d5 ♀d5+ 20 ♀d5 ♀d7 21 ♀d7+ 1-0.

b) 7 ... ♀h5 8 0-0 ♀d3 9 cxd3 e6 10 ♀b3 (Lars Bo Hansen suggests 10 ♀e2 - e4) White has a huge lead in development and some ideas to embarrass the black queen by ♀c3-e2-f4.

Editor's note: instead of 9... e6 in this line, 9... ♀f5 was tried in the game Borge-K. Berg, Esparguette 1992. 10 ♀h3 ♀h8 11 e6 f4e6 12 ♀d4 ♀e3 13 ♀f3 ♀f6 14 g4 h6 15 ♀f4 g5 16 ♀d4 ♀e7 17 ♀e6 ♀e6 17 ... c5 fails to, e.g. 18 ♀e1 cxd4 19 ♀e7 ♀e7 20 ♀e7+ ♀g6 21 ♀d5 ♀f8 22 ♀d6 ♀d6 23 ♀e4+ (Borge) or 18 ♀d5 cxd4 19 ♀d6! (L. Hansen) 18 ♀e6

exd4? (8...f6 19 d2) 20 f3 d2 21 f3 e2? 22 f6 e6 is a better try according to L. Hanan. 19 f3 d2 20 f6 e6 21 f3 e2! h3 22 f6 e6 23 f3 e6 24 f3 e6 25 f3 e6 26 f3 e6 27 f3 e6 28 f3 e6 (with its superior back-up, the white g-pawn proves much faster than its black counterpart on the d-file) 28...d7 29 e5 d4 30 f3 d4 31 e2 d4 32 e4 f4 33 f3 e4 34 f3 e4 35 f3 e4-1-0.

Also interesting is Patrick Wolff's suggestion of 6 f2e2!, with the following possibilities:

a) 6...f6 7 f3 e6 8 d2 e6 9 d4 f6 10 f6 e5 f3 e5 11 e6 f1 with the better position for White e.g. 11...a6 12 f3 e7 13 f3 e6 f3 e6 14 f3 e6 f3 e7 15 e4! and the black king is exposed.

b) 6...f3 e4? 7 f3 e6 2 8 f6 e5 f3 e4! when the black queen seems to be in danger but there is no clear way to capture it.

6 f3 d3 e6
Forced. On 6...f6 7 e6 f3 d3 8 e7 f3 e7 9 e6 e6 10 f4 = ±. Ufimstev-Ravkin, LESSR 1961.

7 f2e2
And there we have it! After no less than 63 years the opening of Nimzowitch-Capablanca is repeated in the same city. Could this be Christened the 'New York Variation'?

7...f6
This time Black chooses a solid continuation. Also possible are 7...f3 e7 and 7...f6.

8 0-0 f6 f9
Transposing again to 7...f6 8 0-0 f6.



9 a4 e5
The alternatives 9...a6 and 9...a5 are examined in Game 15, Kotronias-Tukrnakov.

10 a5 f6 f1
Black's queen is exposed on this square. Preferable was 10...f3 d1 11 f3 e7 with a complex struggle ahead.

11 dxc5 f3 e5?
After 11...f3 e5 12 f3 e7 (Speelman) White has only a slight edge. The text is wrong on the basis that one should not open up the centre when lagging in development.

12 f3 g3 f5 g6 f3
Playing the other knight to g6 would encourage an advance of White's f-pawn, but now the f1-bishop will remain blocked long enough for White to build up a strong initiative.

13 f4 d4! f3 c5



14 f6 e5
Forced, since on any queen retreat, 15 f6 e5 is crushing.

15 f6 e5 f6 f3
On 15...d4? I intended 16 f6 d4! exd4 17 f3 e7 f3 d8 18 f6 e6 f3 e7 19 f3 d4 f3 e8 20 f6 e6 mating quickly.



16 a6!
The most difficult move of the game. White had to resist the temptation of recovering his pawn by 16 f3 e7! as that would be equivalent to surrendering the initiative. The text, on the other hand, has the dual advantage of 'installing' a knight on b5 as well as creating a useful asset in the shape of the dangerous a-pawn. From a

strategic point of view, the game has already been decided.

16...b6
16...b6? 17 f3 e6! is the tactical justification of the previous move.

17 f3 d4! d4
18 f3 h3?

18 f3 e4! f3 e5 f3 e6! is more exact, but I was obsessed with the idea of sacrificing something on d4 (18 f3 d4! f3 e5+).

18...f6 f6 f9!
Black can hardly capture either piece as, in that case, the check on d6 would be murderous:

a) 18...dxc3? 19 f3 e6 f3 d8 20 f3 e5+;

b) 18...dxc3? 19 f3 e6 f3 d8 20 f3 e7+ and now:
19 20...f3 e7 21 f3 e6 f3 e6 (21...f3 e6 22 f3 d4+!) 22 f3 e6 f3 e6 23 f3 d4+;

c) 20...f3 e6 21 f3 e6 f3 d8 22 f4! f3 e5 (22...f3 e7 23 f3 e6 24 f3 f3 e6 25 f3 d3+!) 25 f3 e6 25 f3 e6 f3 e6 26 f3 d4! 26 f3 e6+! f3 d5 27 f3 d4 28 f3 e6 29 f3 e6+.

Of course, I did not have to calculate all the above lines in detail. The pawn on a6 is a bone in Black's throat, creating dangerous mating threats.

19 f3 d4! f3 d6
Trying to get rid of the annoying knight 19...exd4 is simply out of the question,



while on 19 ... ♗d6 White responds with 20 ♗e3 0-0 21 ♗f3, entering a winning endgame.

20 ♗f3!

A temporary sacrifice in order to maintain the initiative. The move is based, as we shall see, on a hidden tactical point.

20 ... ♗xb5

21 ♗xe5 ♗e7?

With time-pressure approaching, Black fails to put up the best resistance: 21 ... ♗e7? is easily dismissed in view of 22 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 23 ♗f3 ♗c6 24 ♗b7 ♗c6 25 ♗b6+, however the true point of 20 ♗f3! would be revealed only after 21 ... ♗xc3! 22 ♗b8+!! (22 ♗xc3+ ♗e7? is not so clear) 22 ... ♗e7? 23 ♗d6! and now:

a) 23 ... ♗f4 24 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 25 ♗b4+ ♗6 26 ♗xc6 ♗xc2+ 27 ♗f1 ♗axb8 28 ♗e7+;

b) 23 ... ♗xc3! 24 ♗d6 ♗d5 25 ♗xe7 ♗xb7 26 ♗f4!.

22 ♗xb5 0-0

On 22 ... ♗xb5, 23 ♗xe7 ♗g8 24 ♗b7 should win without much trouble.

23 ♗d4 ♗c5

24 b4! ♗c4

Taking the pawn would lose at least an exchange after 25 ♗c4. The game continuation allows White a brilliant finish.

25 ♗f5 ♗xb4 (9)



26 ♗h6! 1-0

It is mate next move.

Game 14

Kotronias - Khalifman
Moscow 1987

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 a5 ♗f5 4 ♗c3 ♗b6 5 ♗d3 ♗xd3 6 ♗xd3 e6 7 ♗e2

7 ... ♗e7!

Black should opt for a flexible deployment of his pieces, before embarking on central operations. The alternative 7 ... ♗b7! is of independent significance only after 8 ♗h3 b5 8 ... ♗e7 is a direct transposition to the Main Game, but this is not particularly recommended. After 9 ♗f4, both 9 ... c5 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 0-0 12 ♗d3 ♗f8 13 ♗e2 ♗c6 14 ♗ef4, Bastriakov-Averbakh, USSR 1952, and 9 ...

b4 10 ♗xc2 c5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗d3 ♗c4? 13 b2 ♗b6 14 0-0 ♗7 f5 a3, Kotronias-Sklembris, Kavala 2 1985, leave Black struggling for survival.

On the other hand, a typical blunder after 8 ♗h3 would be 8 ... c5? 9 ♗xd3 ♗a5+ 10 ♗c3 ♗xc3 11 ♗xc3 ♗c6 12 ♗d3 cxd4 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗e7 15 ♗b5 ♗d5 16 c4+ Kotronias-Halldorson, Reykjavik 1988, if Black takes the offered knight by 9 ... exd5 there follows 10 ♗c8+ ♗e7 11 ♗xc5+ ♗e8 12 ♗c8+ ♗e7 13 b3! and White is winning.

8 0-0 ♗b7! (9)



This idea is not good, although it stems from Capablanca. Correct is 8 ... ♗d7 9 a4 a6 as in Kotronias-Tukmakov or 9 ... a5 10 b3 b5 11 ♗g5 ♗f5 as in Kotronias-Orr (see the next Main Game). The queen is displaced on a6 and Black will soon have to admit his mistake by moving her again.

9 ♗h3 ♗d7

10 a4!

This position and similar ones have been discussed in Chapter 1 (mainly diagram 16). White's last move restricts the mobility of the black queen and serves positional purposes as well.

10 ... ♗b7?

A novelty at the time, this move is better than 10 ... ♗c8 11 ♗c3 c5? 12 ♗c6! Mokry-Federsen, Groningen 1977/8. Nevertheless, the text is an admission that the manoeuvre ... ♗b6-a6 was unsuccessful.

11 b3?!

Vacillating. Correct is 11 a5! ♗d8 12 ♗f4. This position has been extensively analysed in Chapter 1 (diagram 30).

11 ... ♗f5

12 a5 ♗d8

13 ♗d1

The basic idea of this manoeuvre is 14 ♗c3 and the central break c2-c4, opening up the position.

13 ... c5

14 c4

Black is OK in the complications which follow. However, the game features the proper antidote to an early ... c5-c6 and was a useful predecessor to Kotronias-Tukmakov (Game 15). This break is a typical reaction by White in such positions and is greatly aided by the position of the white queen on b3.

14 ... cxd4

After 14 ... dxc4 15 d5 White's

position is better than in the game, since the dl-knight is not obstructed by the enemy central pawn.

15 cxd5 ♣xe5
16 dxe6 fxe6
17 ♣f4 ♠f6
18 ♠e1 g6

During the game 18 ... ♗d6 looked better to me, since after 19 ♣b5? ♠h4! 20 ♣xg7+ ♠d7 Black has a somewhat superior ending. However, there is the interesting alternative 19 ♠a2? 0-0 20 ♠e2, sacrificing a pawn for positional pressure.

19 ♣d3

In this position the pawn sacrifice 19 ♠a2? is also worth trying.

19 ... ♗d6
20 ♣xe5 ♗xe5 ♠f7



21 f4

Fruing the dl-knight for aggressive action, after which White stands a little better.

21 ... ♗d6
22 ♣f2 ♗b4
23 ♠e5 0-0
24 ♗b2

It is impossible to play 24

♣e7 ♠b4 and now 25 ♠d5 is unplayable due to the black rank mate on e1.

24 ... ♠f7
25 ♣e4 ♗e7
26 ♠e1 ♠d8
27 ♠d3 ♠d5

Black chooses to return the pawn in order to activate his pieces.

28 ♠d5 exd5
29 ♣g3 ♣g7!

This is the only move, as 29 ... ♣xg7? 30 hxxg3 ♗f6 31 ♗e4 ♗xd4+ 32 ♠e4 a6 33 ♠e5 ♠b8 34 g4 unnecessarily allows White to launch an attack.

30 ♠xd4 ♗f6
31 ♠xf6 ♠xf6
32 ♗xf6 ♠xf6
33 ♣e2 ♠e6
34 ♣f2 ♠e4
35 ♠d1 ♣e6
36 g3

Naturally not 36 ♠d5 ♠e2+ and Black wins a piece.

36 ... ♠b4
37 ♠d5 ♠xb3
38 ♠d7 ♣c5
39 ♠e7 ♠b5
40 ♠c+

The last trap, since now 40 ... ♣g7 41 ♣d4 ♠xe5 42 ♠c5 wins a piece for White.

40 ... ♠f7
41 ♠c7+ ♣-♣

Game 15
Kotronias - Tukmakov
Kaslo 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4

♣d3 ♠b6 5 ♗d3 ♗xd3 6 ♠xd3 e6 7 ♣e2 ♣e7 8 0-0 8 ... ♣d7 9 e4 a6

The game Kotronias - Orr, Dubai OL 1986, saw the double-edged 9 ... a5!?, rendering the advance ... c6-c5 dubious (because of the weakness of b5) for the sake of maintaining the pressure on d4. The game continued 10 b3 h5 (preparing ... ♣e7-f5, as the immediate 10 ... ♣f5 is met by 11 g4 ♣e7 12 ♣g3 with the idea ♗c1-a3 11 ♗e2 (White perceives that his adversary will have to spare a tempo to exchange this bishop himself by ... ♗f8-e7, so he does not fall for 11 ♗a3 ♣f5 with a fine game for Black) 11 ... ♣f5 12 ♠d1 ♠e9



12 ... f6? (tension during an Olympiad is far beyond the ordinary, especially in last round contests; here it caused Black to lose his sense of danger and commit a serious error at the very beginning of the game, while after the correct 12 ... ♗e7 13 ♗e7 ♗e7? the

fight would have just started) 13 exf6 gxf6 14 ♣f4! (seizing the opportunity to prevent Black from castling, the Irish master probably expected 14 ♗c1 ♗b6 with an unclear position, but now White is just winning) 14 ... fxxg5 14 ... ♠b4 15 ♠b3 loses as well 15 ♣xe6 ♣e7 16 ♠f1 (also possible is 16 ♠g3, but White prefers to apply direct pressure on the hapless black monarch) 16 ... ♠b6 17 ♠e2! (a multi-purpose move, which prevents 17 ... ♗e6 because of the continuation 18 ♠xc5+ ♠d8 19 ♗e6 and at the same time prepares to triple the major pieces along the open e-file; the game is practically over now) 17 ... ♠b4 18 ♠d3 ♗d6 (desperation, but 18 ... ♗e6 would have only postponed the end) 19 ♠e3 ♣f6 20 ♣xf6 ♠xf6 21 ♠xe7 ♣e4 22 ♠e5 ♣f6 23 ♠xg5 ♠e8 24 ♠e5 1-0.

10 ♠h3 ♣f5
11 a5 ♠d8
12 ♣d1! c5

Facing the positional threat ♣d1-c3 which will force the exchange of Black's strong knight on f5, the Ukrainian Grandmaster hurries to show some activity in the centre. Taking into account Black's lack of development, this approach is rather committal, but not so much as 12 ... ♠b4 13 ♠d3 c5 (Marke Kristensen suggests 13 ... h5 followed by ...

g6 - Ed) 14 c3 planning ♖f4t.
Kotrovas-K. Berg, Gausdal
Trill Masters 1993.

13 c4!

White reacts in typical and
at the same time effective
fashion.

13 ... dxc4
14 d5 ♗b4

Unfortunately for Black, the
threat to exchange queens is
not enough to nullify White's
initiative. With a series of
unexpected queen manoeuvres,
White manages not only to
preserve, but actually to in-
crease, the pressure.

15 dxc6 fxc6 (99)



16 ♗c3! ♕d4
17 ♖xd4 ♗xd4
18 ♗h3 ♗xe5
19 ♕e3

The exchanges that have
taken place favour White, since
it is much easier for him to
bring new forces into the
battle. Besides, it is quite clear
that Black will have problems
both during the middlegame
and in any ending with equal
material, since the white knight

on c4 is likely to dominate the
proceedings.

19 ... ♕e7
20 ♖xc4 ♗e4!

The continuation 20 ...
♗f5? 21 ♗d5 exd5 22 ♗e6 ♗f7
23 ♖f4 threatening 24 ♗d1 was
highly undesirable, but Black's
best was 20 ... ♗d3! 21 b3! 0-0
22 ... ♖f6? 22 ♖b2 ♖xb2 23
♖xb2! 22 ♖b2 ♗f5 23 ♗g3
with an unclear position which,
however, I consider more
pleasant for White.

21 ♗a4 ♗c6
22 ♗el 000



22 ... ♗xa4??

Black should seek salvation
in an inferior endgame by 22 ...
0-0 23 ♗a6 ♗a6 24 ♗e6,
but instead suffers an illusion
with disastrous consequences.
We have already had the chance
to observe plenty of occasions
where the defender tires of
warding off alternating threats
in different parts of the board.

23 ♗xe6 ♗d8

My opponent had overlooked
that 23 ... 0-0-0 is dealt a death
blow by 24 ♖b6.

24 ♗xe7 ♗c8
25 ♖f4 1-0

25 ... ♗c4 is met by 26 ♗e6-
with mate next move.

Conclusion

5 ♖d3? is an interesting way to
counter 4 ... ♔b6. Personal
experience indicates that Black
will have problems developing
his pieces and achieving the

liberating thrust ... c6-c5. Also,
the games Kotrovas-King and
Kotrovas-Tukmakov demon-
strate that Black should avoid
an early fight for the centre
when White's lead in develop-
ment could make itself felt.
However, White players should
be alert, as a slight mishandling
can change the picture surpris-
ingly quickly.

4 The 4... h5 Variation

Game 16
Nunn - Dlugy
London 1986

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4
♙c3 4 ... h5? 000



After White scored some beautiful wins employing the line 4 ♘c3 e6 5 g4 ♘g6 6 ♘g2, Black players started searching for something new and less complicated. Given the benefit of hindsight, 4... h5? is the most committal choice of all: White's kingside expansion is prevented, but at the cost of weakening the g5 square; Black also has to solve the problem of bringing his king into safety.

5 ♘d3!
White takes a first step

towards shaking Black's control of f5. As a matter of principle, this is the only way to expose the weak side of 4... h5.

5 ... ♘d3
6 ♗xd3 e6
7 ♘f3 ♙h6

Probably the best. For 7... ♗b6 see Game 17, Short-Seirwan.

8 0-0 ♘f5?

This is a bit premature, inviting White's next move. Correct in my opinion is Nunn's 8... ♘d7 with the following possible continuations:

a) 9 ♗d1 e5 19... ♘f5 10 ♘e2 c5 11 c4! 10 ♘g5 c4 10... ♗a5? 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 11... ♘c5 12 ♗b5 12 ♘e4 ♗c7 13 ♘d6+ ♘d6 14 exd6 ♗e6 requires analysis 11 ♘d8 cxd3 12 ♘g5 dxc2 13 ♗d1!;

b) 9 ♘e2 c5 10 c4 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘b6 12 ♗b6+ ♗d7 13 ♗xd7+ ♘d7 13... ♗d7? 14 ♘xb4 ♗xb6 15 ♗c1!.

In both these lines the queens come off the board, but White keeps a slight advantage due to his better development.

9 ♘e2!

Continuing in the spirit of

his fifth move, White is ready to swap every piece that lands on f5, thus slowly demoting Black's kingside of its defences.

9 ... ♘d7

In the game Glek-Vyzhmanavin, Lvov 1985, Black played 9... ♘e7 but after 10 b3 ♘d7 11 c4 ♘f8 12 ♘d2 ♘g6 13 c5 it became clear that he was lacking a constructive plan. This is an important example, showing that White can generate play on all parts of the board if the second player resorts to passive manoeuvres.

10 ♘g3

Also interesting is 10 ♗d1? with the idea b2-b3, c2-c4 but the text is more direct. Black now has to make a difficult choice.

10 ... ♙h4? 000



Opening up the f-file by 10... ♘g3? 11 ♗g3! would be suicidal. However, better is Nunn's suggestion 10... g6? 11 ♘d5 gxf5 12 ♘g5 ♘e7 13 h4 with a slight plus for White due to the weakness of the

h-pawn. The text neglects Black's development without good reason.

11 ♘xh4 ♗xh4
12 ♘e3 ♗d8
13 ♗fd1 ♗c8?

Better is 13... ♘e7, but White will continue similarly to Glek-Vyzhmanavin, gaining a big space advantage.

14 b3 c5?

This move is consistent but wrong. Against a lesser opponent Dlugy might have got away with his plan, but objectively he should have reconciled himself to passive defence, starting with 14... ♘e7. As it is, Nunn is able to exploit Black's inaccuracies in a simple and powerful manner.

15 c4!+ cxd4 000

Black is left with a choice of evils. Nunn analyses: 15... h4 15... ♘b6 16 dxc5 ♘xc5 17 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 18 ♘e4+! 16 ♘e2 06 cxd5? hcg3 17 dxc6 ♘xc5 18 dxc5 ♗xc3 19 exf7 ♗f7 20 ♗d3!+ and now,

a) 16... ♙h6 17 ♗cd dxc4 18 bxc4 cxd4 19 ♘xd4 dxc5 20 ♗e4 ♗e7 21 ♗g4+;

b) 16... dxc4 17 ♗xc4 cxd4 18 ♗xd4 dxc5 19 ♗e4 dxc3 20 ♗xc3+.

16 cxd5! ♘xe5

After 16... dxc3 17 dxc6 Black has no defence to the numerous threats it is in this variation that the weaknesses created by... h7-h5 become particularly glaring.



17 bxc4 exd5
Losing at once, but 17 ...
 dxc4 18 fxc7 could only pro-
long resistance.

18 bxc4 1-0
Black resigned, since 18 ...
 fxc6 19 fxc1 leaves White a
clear rook ahead.

Game 17
Short - Selrawan
Rotterdam 1989

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 $\text{d}f5$ 4
 $\text{ex}c3$ h5? 5 $\text{d}d3!$ dxc3 6
 fxc3 e6 7 $\text{c}f3$

7 ... $\text{g}b6$
Selrawan tries a different
approach in comparison to the
previous game: the king will
hide on the queenside, while in
the centre Black prepares to
strike with ... f7-f6. However,
in my opinion, his plan lacks
chances of success for two
reasons: firstly, the black king
castles opposite a mobile pawn
mass, ready to advance at the
earliest opportunity; secondly,
his counterplay in the centre
will merely create a backward

e-pawn which is very difficult
to advance without creating
further weaknesses.

8 0-0 $\text{g}b6$
Selrawan suggests 8 ...
 $\text{c}e7!$? and 8 ... $\text{c}d7$ which
both bear a close resemblance
to lines in Chapter 3. The only
differences are the placement
of White's king's knight and
the advancement of Black's
h-pawn, but I do not think
these facts can drastically alter
the evaluation of the position.

9 $\text{c}d1$
White's loss of time is only
apparent, since the black queen
is far away from the centre and
will need to move again in
order to rejoin the action.

9 ... $\text{c}e7$
10 $\text{c}e2$
A typical motif that has been
encountered in several cases in
this book. White is ready to
swap knights with $\text{c}e2$ - $\text{g}3$,
after Black's knight arrives on
f5.

10 ... $\text{c}d7$
11 e3 $\text{c}f5$
12 $\text{d}g5$ $\text{d}e7$
13 $\text{c}xg3!$ $\text{c}xg3$
On 13 ... $\text{g}6$ the automatic
reaction would be 14 $\text{c}d5$ $\text{g}d5$
15 h4, permanently fixing the
weakness on h5.

14 $\text{f}xg3$ f6
White's pressure along the
f-file forces this pawn action
which, although undoubtedly
planned beforehand, cannot be
sufficiently supported by pieces

and thus creates more weak-
nesses than counterplay.

15 exf6 gxf6
16 $\text{d}f4$ 0-0-0
17 $\text{f}e1$ $\text{c}f8$ (104)



The black knight occupies a
passive position on the back
rank, while the rest of his
pieces are also not conveniently
placed. Black's inactive stance
encourages White to expand
immediately on the queenside.

18 b4!
Ruling out ... c6-c5, and
preparing to open lines against
the black king, Selrawan, realiz-
ing how perilous the situation
is becoming, decides to bring
his queen back into play:

18 ... $\text{g}b6!$
19 e4 $\text{d}d6$
20 $\text{g}h2$ $\text{g}c7$
21 b5 $\text{f}h7!$

The only move. Not only
does it defend the second rank,
it also prepares ... $\text{f}h7$ -e7
giving his e-pawn ample pro-
tection. Now Short has to work
hard to get something tangible:

22 $\text{d}xd6!$ $\text{g}xd6$
On 22 ... $\text{f}d6$ 23 $\text{g}f4!$

(Cabrilo) But now the black
queen is also lured away from
controlling e5.

23 bxc6 $\text{g}xc6$
24 $\text{g}f4$

White again occupies the
fatal diagonal, this time with
his queen and, very significant-
ly, with tempo.

24 ... $\text{c}d7$ (105)



25 $\text{g}h1!$
White would like to play 25
 $\text{f}e1$ $\text{f}e7$ 26 c4 dxc4 27 d5 but
this fails because of 27 ... $\text{g}c5!$.
Having realized this, Short sets
his opponent a cunning trap ...

25 ... $\text{f}e7!$
... which is spotted immedi-
ately. Black prepares to block the
dangerous h3-h8 diagonal if,
and when, appropriate.

26 a5 e5
27 $\text{g}f5$ $\text{g}b8$
28 $\text{g}xb5$ $\text{g}xc3$
29 $\text{g}f5$ $\text{f}de8$
30 $\text{f}e1$

White holds a slight advan-
tage due to his safer king,
better endgame prospects and
strongly-placed queen on f5,
but Black is not totally devoid

of resources. However, his next move instead of the solid 30 ... ♖b4! to be followed by 31 ... ♗d6 as recommended by Cairns! unwisely removes the queen from the defence, allowing Short to start a fierce attack.

30 ... ♗c37
31 ♗c2!

Ensuring the penetration of White's pieces, Black resists well, but Short leaves him no chances:

31 ... ♗a8
32 a6 ♗b6
33 axb7+ ♗xb7
34 dxe5 fxe5
35 ♗e1 ♗b6
36 ♗xe5 ♗be7 (306)



37 ♗b1!

A Greek gift. If Black takes the proffered knight by 37 ...

♗a5, then 38 ♗c7 decides the outcome immediately.

37 ... ♗b7
38 ♗c6 ♗e3
39 ♗xa7!

The concluding blow, after which Black has no hope left (39 ... ♗a7 40 ♗a7+ ♗a7 41 ♗c7+ ♗a8 is followed not by 42 ♗xb6 ♗e4, but 42 ♗d4 with immediate mate).

39 ... ♗b8
40 ♗c6+ ♗c8
41 ♗e7++ ♗d8
42 ♗xd5! 1-0

Black decided that the white knight had danced enough.

Conclusion

The line with 4 ... h5! is extremely dangerous for Black since important positional concessions are made without any tangible gain. As far as practice has shown, White is able to capitalize on his development and space advantage, a well-timed c2-c4 usually being the main idea. Apparently, there is no satisfactory path for Black to equalize, but 7 ... ♗b6 8 0-0 ♗d7 should be tested in serious competition before a final verdict is reached.

5 The 4 ... ♗d7/c8 Variation

Game 18

Van der Wiel - Hort
Wijk aan Zee 1986

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4 ♗c3

4 ... ♗d7 (307)

This move has been adopted on a regular basis by GM Vladimir Hort. Together with 4 ... ♗c8, it serves to prevent g2-g4 without weakening Black's pawn skeleton. Although this plan looks artificial, White has been unable so far to prove a considerable advantage.



5 ♗e3

An alternative that has been tried successfully here is 5 ♗f3. The game Schmittke-Serrero, German Ch 1991, continued 5 ... e6 6 ♗h4 ♗g6 7 ♗e3

♗c7 8 f4 a6! (308)



9 f3 ♗d5 10 ♗d5 ecf5 11 ♗d3 g6 12 g4! fxe4 13 ♗h4 14 ♗f3 ♗b6 15 0-0-0 ♗a3+ 16 ♗a3 ♗e7 17 h4 ♗d7 18 h5 gdh5 19 ♗h5 0-0-0 20 ♗f5 b5 21 ♗g3 f6 22 ♗e4 ♗f7 23 ♗g4 fxe5 24 dxe5 ♗e7 25 ♗e2 ♗b7 26 ♗f4 ♗f8 27 ♗d3 ♗b7? 28 ♗c6 ♗g5+ 29 ♗f4 1-0. However, Black should not have allowed 9 f5 (thus B ... ♗e7).

5 ... h6

Nunn-Hort, Lugano 1987, continued 5 ... h5 6 ♗f3 ♗b6 7 h3 e6 8 ♗e2 ♗e7 9 ♗d2 b5 10 ♗g5 a5 11 ♗d1 ♗b8 12 a4 b4 13 ♗d1 ♗a6 14 0-0 ♗g6 15 ♗f4 ♗f5 16 ♗a7 ♗a6 17 ♗e3 ♗b6 18 ♗d1 0-0-0 19 ♗e4 ♗e7 20 ♗a6 ♗a6 21 ♗g5 with White enjoying a slight advantage.

according to Seirawan.

6 ♖h3? ♘e3 7 ♗b3 e6 8
 ♘e2 ♘e7 18 ... c5 9 dxc5 ♘b6
 10 c6! ♗b6 11 ♘d4♠ 9 0-0 ♘f5
 10-♘e3♠ is a quieter approach.
 6 ... e6
 7 g4 ♘b7
 8 f4 ♘b4

Black declares his intentions: he is planning an harmonious development of his knights to e7 and d7, followed by ... 0-0-0. The only disadvantage of this scheme is that sooner or later Black has to part with his valuable dark-squared bishop.

9 ♘e2 ♘e7
 The theoretical duel between Nunn and Hort had started earlier (Bundesliga 1983/4), with 9 ... ♘b6 10 ♘g3 ♘c7 11 a3 ♘e7, also assessed as slightly better for White by Seirawan.

10 a3 ♘xc3+
 11 ♘xc3 ♗c7
 12 ♘d3

While this surrenders the advantage of the two bishops, it is difficult to find an alternative plan for White. The type of pawn structure suggests that the only way to cause Black serious worries is by enforcing the advance f4-f5.

12 ... ♘d7
 13 ♘xh7 ♗xh7
 14 ♗d3 g6
 15 ♗f2 ♗g7! 009

This clever move creates obstacles in White's path but I think that with accurate play

some advantage can still be hoped for.



16 0-0-0

As this does not lead to anything special, I propose here the continuation 16 ♘e2? (the knight protects g3 in preparation for ♗f2-h4) 16 ... 0-0-0 (on 16 ... c5 White replies 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 ♗c3 and now either 18 ... ♘b6 19 ♗xc7 ♘xc7 20 ♘d4 ♘d7 21 a4 with a slight advantage in the ending or 18 ... ♗c8 19 0-0-0 20 ♘g3 with White enjoying some initiative) 17 ♘h4 g5 18 f5! gxf4 18 ... exd5 19 gxf5 gxf4 20 f6 is good for White, but now the point of 16 ♘e2? is revealed since the move ... ♗g7-g3 is no longer possible! 19 f6 ♗g6 19 ... ♗g8 20 fxe7 ♗e6 21 ♗h7 20 fxe7 ♗e8 21 ♗f1 with a slight advantage for White.

16 ... 0-0-0

The position is equal.

17 ♗d7!

Wrong is 17 ♘h4 g5 18 f5! gxf4 19 f6 ♘g6 20 exf6 ♗f4+, according to the Dutch IM Petersen.

17 ... a6

18 ♘h4 ♗e8

Black has satisfactory play by simple means, therefore Hort refrains from ideas like 18 ... g5! 19 f5 ♗g8 (planning ... c6-c5) with unclear play (Seirawan).

19 f5 gxf5

20 ♘xe7 ♗xe7

21 gxf5 ♗e8

22 ♗h1 ♗xg1

23 ♗xg1 c5

24 fxe6 fxe6

25 ♗g6 ♘d8

26 ♗f7 cxd4

27 ♗e8 ♗xg8

28 ♗xg8+ ♗e7

29 ♗h7+ ♘d8

4-4

Game 19

Kotronias - Skembris
 Athens (4th Match Game)

1987

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♘f5 4
 ♘c3

4 ... ♗c8

In Timman-Speelman, Reykjavik 1991, Black experimented with 4 ... a6?, achieving an excellent position after 5 ♘e3 ♗c7 6 ♘g2 e6 7 ♘g3 ♘c7 8 ♘d5? ♘d5 9 ♘d3 ♘xc3 10 fxe3 c5, although this is given as equal by Seirawan, I believe that White has already ruined his chances, a fact convincingly confirmed by the game continuation: 11 ♗g4 ♘c6 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♗f1 h5 14 ♗h4?

♘e7 15 ♗f7 cxd4 16 exd4 f6
 17 ♗f4 ♗b8 18 ♗f1 bxc5 19 dxc5
 ♗f6+ 20 g3 ♘xc5 21 ♗g5 h4 22
 ♗g4 hgx3 23 hgx3 ♘c3 24
 bxc3 c5 25 ♗g5 ♗b5 26 ♗b2
 ♗b2 27 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 28 ♗xc5+
 ♗c7 29 ♗xc7+ ♗xc7 30 ♗d4 g5
 31 ♗g4 ♗g8 32 ♗d4 ♗f2 33 ♘d3
 ♗b6 and 0-1. Nevertheless,
 6 ♘d3 ♘d3 7 cxd3? e6 8 ♗d
 is slightly better for White,
 according to Speelman

5 ♘e3 g6
 6 ♗d2 ♘d7
 7 ♘g2 h5
 8 ♘g3 ♘e6?

Also bad is 8 ... ♘b6? 9 ♘d5 ♗d5 10 b4 (even better than 10 a4? a5 11 ♗d3 e6 12 ♗b3 ♘b4 13 ♗d3 ♘c4 14 ♗c1 ♗g4 15 0-0 and the white rook's unusual position on b3 is more of a strength than a weakness, if only because of the unsatisfactory cooperation of Black's forces) 10 ... ♗d7 11 a4 e6 (or 11 ... a5 12 bxc5 ♗xc5 13 e6 fxe6 14 ♗d3 with a strong attack for White) 12 a5 ♗c8 13 ♘e2 and the plan ♗e2-f4-d3-c5 guarantees White an advantage. Comparatively best seems 8 ... e6 9 ♘d5 gxf5 10 ♘e2 c5 11 c3 h4 12 ♘f4 with White enjoying only a small superiority.

9 ♘d3 ♘b6
 10 a4 h4
 11 ♗g2 ♗f5!
 Better is 11 ... a5 12 ♗a3 ♗d7
 followed by ... ♘b6-a8-c7.

12 a5 ♘e4
 Not 12 ... ♘xd3? 13 cxd3 ♘d7

14 e6 and White is already winning.

13 ♖xc4 dxc4
14 0-0 ♖h6
15 ♖a4 ♖e6
16 ♖xb6?
Superior is 16 ♖d1!
16 ... ♖xb6
17 ♖f4 ♖f5
18 ♖d1+ ♖g6



16 ... b5

This is the only move to continue fighting, at least in a practical sense; for example, after 18 ... 0-0? 19 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 20 ♖e2 the game is beyond salvation.

19 axb6 axb6
20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8
21 ♖xe6 fxe6
22 ♖e2

White has a big advantage, but it is still not so easy to bring it home.

22 ... b5
23 ♖e4 0-0
24 ♖g4 ♖g7
25 ♖c5 ♖f7
26 ♖f3 ♖d8!

Skembris manages to set a few traps, e.g. here 27 ♖bc6?

♖d5 28 ♖bc5 exd5 29 c3 ♖d1 and Black has achieved some counterplay.

27 c3 ♖d5 0-0



28 ♖b3?

With the idea 28 ... ♖b3? 29 g4 h4g3 30 ♖h7+ ♖g7 31 f4g3+-. Black does not have adequate improvements in this variation, for example 29 ... ♖h6 30 ♖b3 or 29 ... ♖g7 30 ♖b4 planning ♖e1 and ♖e4. Normally the end should be near now, as White conquers the a-file for his rook.

28 ... ♖g7
29 ♖a1 b4
30 ♖g4 bxc3
31 bxc3 ♖b8
32 h3 ♖b5
33 ♖f4 ♖f7
34 ♖a7 ♖d8
35 ♖e4?

Jeopardizing the win in time trouble. Immediately decisive was 35 ♖g5 (threatening 36 ♖f6+) 35 ... ♖b8 36 ♖xe6 etc.

35 ... ♖b1+
36 ♖h2 ♖b8
37 ♖g5+??

Continuing in the same

direction; 37 ♖b6+! was enough to achieve the desired objective, e.g. 37 ... ♖g8 38 ♖a7? ♖e7 39 ♖f7+ ♖h8 40 ♖f6+ ♖g8 41 ♖b6+ ♖h8 42 ♖b7 or 37 ... ♖f8 38 ♖d5 ♖b7 39 ♖b6+ with an easily winning position.

37 ... ♖e8
38 ♖a6 ♖d7
39 ♖e4 ♖e1
40 ♖d2 ♖b7
41 ♖a2 ♖c7?

White has still kept a considerable advantage, but it was possible to continue fighting through 41 ... ♖e8 42 ♖f3 ♖b+ (the only serious try) 43 ♖d1 ♖b6+ 44 ♖h2 ♖a2 45 ♖g2 ♖d7 46 ♖f3 ♖a5 (the variations 46 ... ♖c2 47 ♖h7 and 46 ... ♖a8 47 ♖e4 ♖e8 48 ♖g4 ♖f7 49 ♖g5+ lose simply) 47 ♖e4 ♖d5 48 ♖g4 and despite White's obvious superiority the game is not over yet.

42 ♖g4 g5
43 ♖xg5 ♖e2 0-0
44 ♖g8? ♖xf2
45 ♖xe6 ♖f8

Or 45 ... ♖a3 46 ♖b7+ ♖c8



47 ♖b7+ ♖b7 48 ♖a2+ ♖c7 49 ♖xc4 etc.

46 d5

The rest is pretty clear.

46 ... cxd5
47 ♖bd5 ♖b6
48 ♖xc4 1-0

Conclusion

Black's 4th move alternatives are not to be taken lightly; nothing has been refuted and nothing has been explored well. However, Spielman's 4 ... a6? looks more useful than 4 ... ♗d7/c8, and only further encounters can show what is the best plan for White.

6 The 3 ... c5 Variation

Game 20
Tal - Botvinnik
Moscow (8th Match Game)
1961

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5
3 ... c5 (B3)



This move became fashionable in the early 1960s when Botvinnik employed it in several World Championship games against Tal. Nowadays it is a new bird in tournament practice since it has been long established that White can get an advantage in a variety of ways.

4 dxc6 e6

For 4 ... dxc6 see Game 21.

5 Bg4?

Some old analysis by Boleslavsky runs 5 Qe3 Qe7 6 c3 Qf5 7 Qd4 and now after either

7 ... Bc7 8 Qd3 Qxc5 9 Qxc5 Qxc5 10 Qxd5 exd5 11 Qf3 Qc6 12 D-O-O 13 Qxb2 or 7 ... Qxd4 8 cxd4 b6 9 b4 a5 10 Qb5 Qd7 11 Qb4 White's superiority is evident.

In the 4th game of the same match Tal explored 5 Qc3, but the result was less successful: 5 ... Qc6 6 Qf4 Qxc7 7 Qf3 Qc6 8 Qc3 Qxc5 9 Qxc5 Qxc5 10 Qb3 Qc6 11 O-O-O Qe7 12 f4 g6 13 Bb6 Qf8 14 Bg5 Qg5 15 fxe5 b6 16 Qx4 Qd7 17 Qf4 a6 18 Qb6 Qd8 19 Qc7 hxe5 20 c4 d4 21 b4 Qe7 22 Qxd8 Qxd8 23 b5 Qxb8 24 Qe2 (B4)



24 ... f5 25 Qf3 a5b5 26 cxb5 Qxb5 27 Qxb7 Qe7 28 a4 Qxc6 29 Qxc6 Qxb7 30 Qd2 Qd7 31 Qd+ Qb6 32 Qxc1 Qc5 33 Qd3 Qb8 34 Qb+ Qc6 35 cxb6+

Qd7 36 Qxc+ Qe7 37 Qd1 Qd3+ 38 Qc4 Qc3+ 39 Qb5 Qc3 40 Qd1 Qxb2 41 Qe7+ Qe8 and 42-4. My conclusion is that 5 Qc3 is rather inconsistent and worthless from the theoretical point of view.

5 ... Qc6

5 ... h5!7 is a likely improvement here, so Boleslavsky's analysis is more to be trusted. It is also possible to regain the pawn immediately with 5 ... Qd7 6 Qb5 Qc7. The text is a dubious idea which underestimates White's tactical possibilities.

6 Qf3 Bc7

7 Qb5 Qd7

8 Qxc6!

White's position contains many strongpoints to compensate for the bishop pair. Black's tempo loss in the opening allows Tal to carry out typically Nimzowitschian ideas in exemplary fashion.

8 ... Bxc6

9 Qe3

White not only has an extra pawn but is also ahead in development. Therefore Botvinnik decides to regain the material at the cost of deteriorating his pawn structure.

9 ... Qb6

10 Qxb6!

The second bishop goes, but White has correctly judged that in the resulting position Black cannot effectively use his bishops because of his back-

ward development. On the contrary, the white knights have excellent squares from which to operate.

10 ... gxb6

The advantage of the open g-file is offset by the insecurity of the black king and the weakened pawn structure. Practically, Black is facing insurmountable problems in such positions.

11 Qbd2 Bxc5

12 c4!

Predicting ... O-O-O, Tal is quick to open up the game. White's central control guarantees that Black's bishops will not be dangerous.

12 ... O-O-O

13 O-O Bb8

14 Bfd1 Bb6

15 Bb4!

Tal is piling on the pressure with quiet moves. The text keeps an eye on d8 and h6, while at the same time protecting his own potential weakness on f2. It should be noted that the light-squared bishop's future is also hampered since the valuable e7 square is also controlled.

15 ... a5

Trying to blockade the queenside, but the impression is that this rather invites White to attack. Preferable is 15 ... Qe8 or 15 ... Qg8 when Black can still fight.

16 Bc1 Bg8

The game continuation

suggests that immediately 16 ... e4 was better.

17 ♖b3 a4
Black cannot play 17 ... dxc4 18 ♗xc4 when the pin on the d-file will win material for White. However, it was possible to open up the game for the bishops with 17 ... ♗b8 18 cxd5 ♗xc1 19 ♗xc1 ecd5 20 ♗xb5 ♖b6 and Black keeps some practical hopes alive.

18 c5
This move creates the kind of semi-blocked position which reveals the power of knights over bishops taking advantage of the strongpoint at d4. White can expand on the queenside at will.

18 ... ♗c7
19 ♖bd4 ♗c8 (115)



20 b4 axb3
21 axb3 ♗d8
Botvinnik tries to take the sting out of White's attack by exchanging queens, but here White is so superbly placed that he can happily agree to this. Anyway, Black could hardly find anything better in

view of his miserable king position and White's queenside pawn majority.

22 ♗xd8 ♗xd8
23 b4 ♗g4
24 b5 ♗c6
25 c6

White's forceful pawn advance, aided by his whole army, cannot be stopped by Black. The most important rôle is played by the knight on d4, a superb blockader.

26 ♗c2 ♗g7

The bishop's entrance to the game comes too late to change the outcome. White's forces on the queenside are already poised to deliver the knock-out blow and the a-file is about to have its say.

27 ♗a1 ♗xe5?

27 ... ♗xd4 was the only way to prolong resistance, but White still wins after 28 ♗xd4 ♗e5 29 ♗c2 ♗xd4 30 ♗b4 ♗c7 31 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 32 ♗b4 ♗c7 33 cxb7 etc.

28 ♗xe5 ♗xd4
29 ♗d7+! 1-0

Not waiting for 29 ... ♗d7 (even worse is 29 ... ♗c7 30 b4 ♗b8 31 cxb7) 30 cxd7 ♗b8 31 ♗c8+ ♗c8 32 ♗d8+! when White sweeps away the whole black army at one stroke.

Game 21
Shabalov - K. Arkel
London 1991

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5

3 ... c5

At this point, Black's lesser alternatives are, to say the least, dubious. For the sake of completeness we shall take a quick look at one of them:

a) 3 ... ♖a6?! (what is the idea?), after which I recommend 4 ♗d2 ♗b6 14 ... ♗c7 5 ♗d3+ 5 c3 (with the idea b2-b4) 5 ... c5 6 dxc5 ♗xc5 7 ♗b3 ♗xb3 8 axb3 and White is clearly better.

Against 3 ... ♗b6 Nunn has twice essayed the immediate 4 c3 with good results. The game Nunn-Nikolic, Bundesliga 1984, continued 4 ... ♗f5 5 ♗e2 e6 6 ♗f4 ♗e7 7 ♗d2 ♗c7 8 g4 ♗e6 9 h4 f6 10 ♗xg6 hxg6 11 ♗f3 ♗d7 12 ♗g1 0-0-0 13 ♗d3 c5 14 ♗f4 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♗c6 16 ♗xg6 ♖b4+ 17 ♗f1 ♗d8 18 h5 (116)



18 ... fxe6 19 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♗e5 ♖b6 21 ♗d2 ♗e5 22 ♗xe5 ♗b6+ 23 ♗e2 ♗c2 24 ♗g1 ♗a3 25 f4 ♗e7 26 ♗ac1 ♗b8 27 f5 ♗b6 28 fxe6 ♗xe5 29 dxc5 ♗b8 30 e7 ♗d8 31 ♗f7 ♗b8 32 g5 d4 33 ♗f1 and 1-0, while Nunn-K.

Arkel, London 1990, saw 4 ... ♗c7 5 ♗e2 f5 ♗d3 g6 6 ♗d2 f6 ♗f3? 6 ... h5 7 ♗f1 (7 ♗d3?) 7 ... ♗b6 8 ♗a3 ♗e4 9 ♗f3 ♗a3 10 fxe3 ♗f5- was van der Wiel-Karasek, Wijk aan Zee 1982, but White could keep a slight advantage with 10 ♗e3, according to Seirawan) 5 ... g5 6 ♗d3 ♗b6 7 ♗d2 ♗e4 8 f3 ♗d7 9 f4 ♗e6 10 ♗f3 ♗e7 11 h3 ♗f5 12 ♗d5 ♗e5 13 g4 ♗e4 14 ♗f1 f5 15 ♗d6 e6 16 ♗b3 ♗d7 17 ♗d3 ♗e7 18 ♗a4 fxe4 19 0-0-0 0-0-0 20 c4 ♗b6 21 c5 with a clear advantage for White, according to Spielman, although Black eventually managed to draw.

4 dxc5 ♗c6
5 ♗b5

This is Boleslavsky's suggestion, while inferior seems 5 ♗f3, after which the game Krov-K. Arkel, Leningrad 1989, progressed as follows: 5 ... ♗g4 6 ♗e5 ♗e5+ 7 ♗c3 e6 8 ♗d3 e6 9 ♗e4+ bxc6 10 a3 ♗d3 11 ♗d3 ♗e5 12 0-0 ♗a3 13 ♗xc3 ♗e7 14 b4 ♗e7 15 ♗e4 a5 16 ♗e5 0-0 17 ♗b3 axb4 18 axb4 ♗f5 19 ♗c3 ♗b6 20 ♗a8 ♗a8 21 ♗d1 ♗a6+ 22 ♗bd1 ♗b4 23 ♗b8+ ♗f8 24 ♗xc6 h5 with a slight advantage for Black (eventually converted to a win after another 24 moves).

5 ... ♗a5+
6 ♗c3 e6
7 ♗e3 ♗e7

The old analysis by Boleslavsky runs 7 ... ♗d7 8 ♗f3

(also interesting is Pachman's 8 Dxc6 Dxc6 9 Qf3 Dxc5 10 Dxc5 Qxc5 11 Qd4 ± - see Chapter 1, diagram 18) 8 ... Qxc5 08
... Qe7 9 a3 Qe6 10 Dxc6
 Dxc6 11 Qd4 ±) 9 Qxc5 Dxb5 10
 Qh5 g6 11 Qxc6 Qf6 12 Qb4
 Qe4 13 Qxc8 and White has a
clear plus.

8 Qf3 Qf5 (107)



9 a3!±

As often happens in the Caro Advance, the specific requirements of the position demand that White spoil his pawn formation. In compensation, the dynamism of his position increases considerably. And just have a look at the c8-bishop, which Black's very first move planned to liberate!

9 ... Qxc3

10 fxa3 Qc7

11 e4

A most unusual break by White in this variation, all the more effective for this reason.

11 ... dxe4

12 Qxc4 Qxc5

Black has no option, but forcing tactics from a position

with fewer developed pieces can only lead to a hopeless situation.

13 Qxc5 Qa5 +

14 b4 Qxb5

15 Qd6 a5

Unless action, since opening up the a-file would only benefit White. Although he could hardly hope to save himself in the long run, Black's best was to initiate the plan he chooses next move by 15 ... Qe7 , e.g. 16 Qd8 Qb6 with just a few practical chances.

16 Qf2 Qe7

17 Qhd1 Qd5 (108)

Now 17 ... Qb6 is impossible, but Black has deluded himself that he has built a fortress.



18 c4!

Such blows almost always exist in the Caro Advance when White has a lead in development.

18 ... Qxc4

19 Qa1 Qa2 +

20 Qg3

As if to demonstrate Black's inability to undertake anything even resembling counterplay.

20 ... axb4

21 Qa6

The final conclusive blow, threatening above all 22 Qxd5

21 ... bxa6

22 Qc7 1-0

Black is not given any hope with 22 Qc6 ±, while now the renewed threat 23 Qxd5 spells the end.

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